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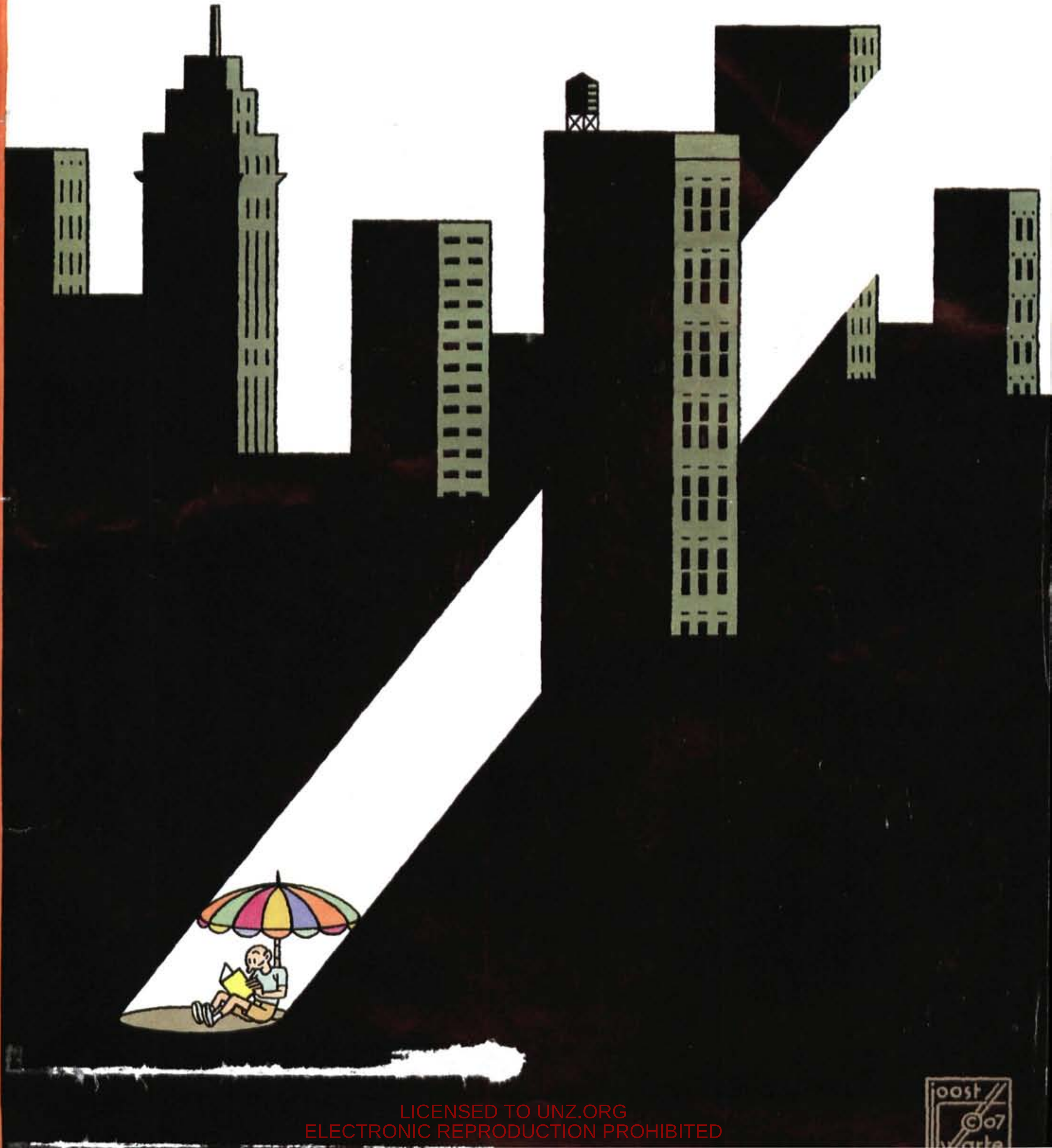
# THE NEW YORKER

AUG. 20, 2007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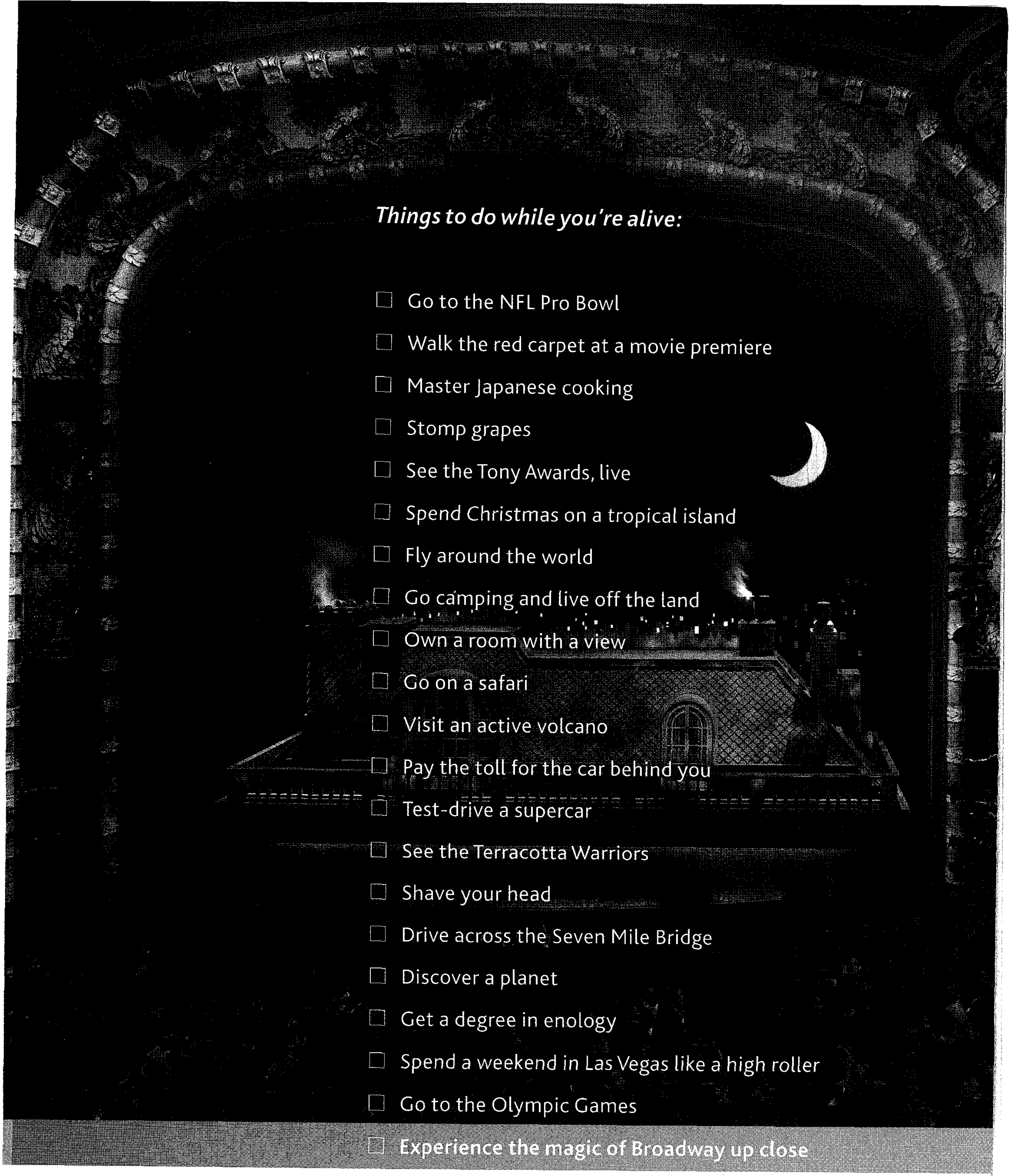

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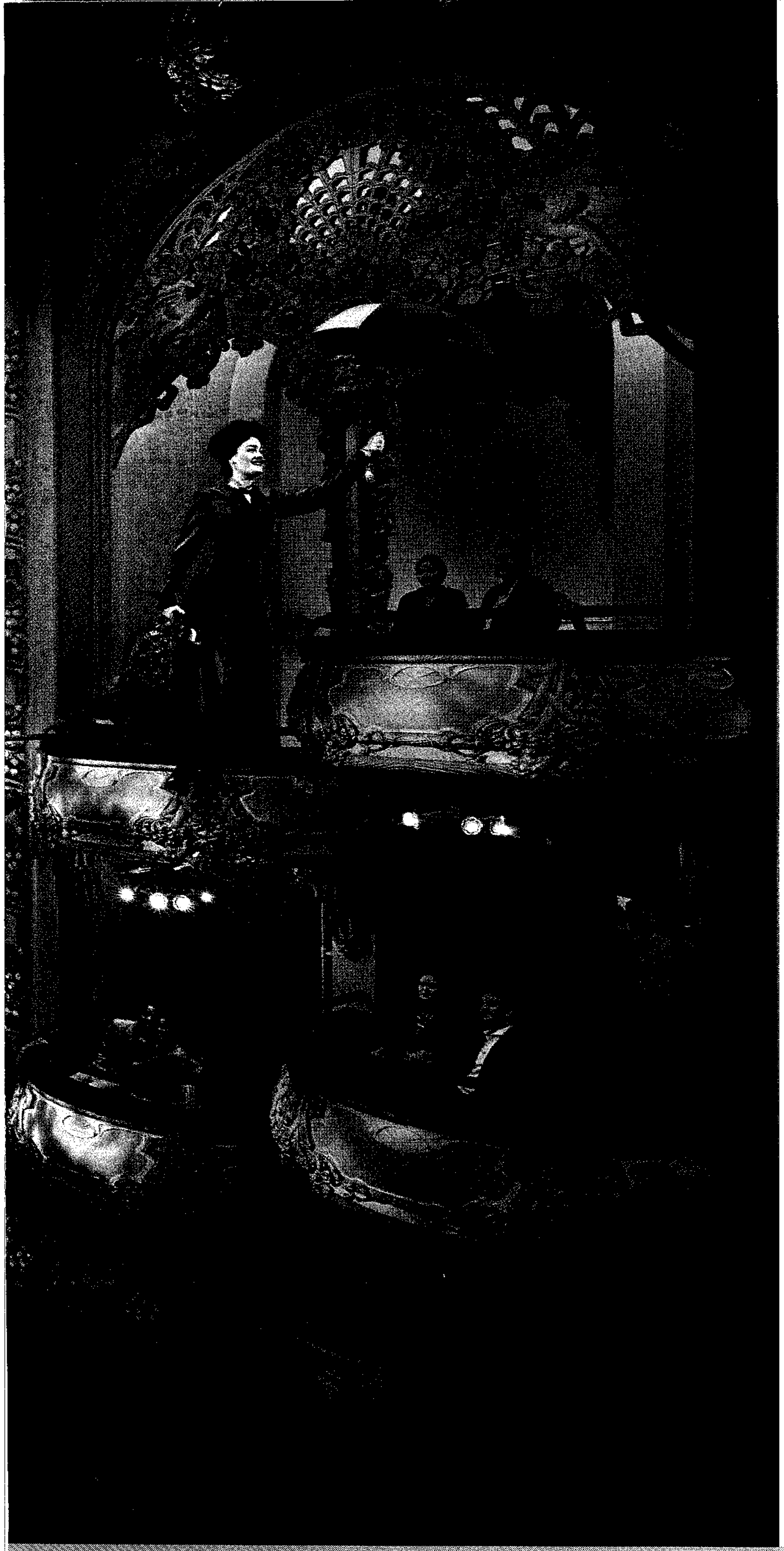

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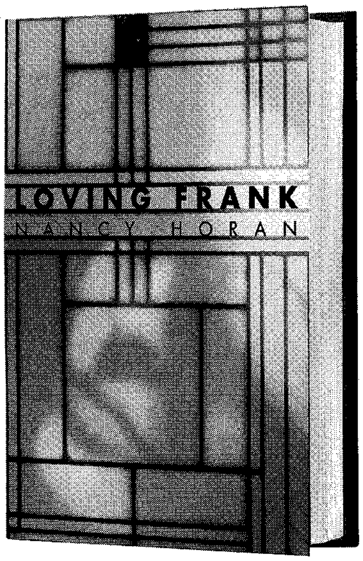

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# CONTRIBUTORS

Peter J. Boyer ("Mayberry Man," p. 44) has been a *New Yorker* staff writer since 1992.

David Owen ("The Dark Side," p. 28) is the author of "Sheetrock & Shellac: A Thinking Person's Guide to the Art and Science of Home Improvement," which is out in paperback.

Roger Angell (The Talk of the Town, p. 24) has written seven books on baseball, including "Five Seasons" and "Game Time."

Paul Simms (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 34) writes for magazines and television.

Tim Page ("Parallel Play," p. 36), the classical-music critic for the Washington *Post*, won the Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 1997. He lives in Baltimore.

Gerald Stern (Poem, p. 51) received the Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets in 2005. He will publish a chapbook, "The Preacher," in the fall and a new collection of poems, "Save the Last Dance," next year.

Bruce McCall (Sketchbook, p. 55) is a regular contributor of art and humor pieces. "All Meat Looks Like South America" is his latest book.

Burkhard Bilger ("The Mushroom Hunters," p. 62) is a staff writer and the author of "Noodling for Flatheads."

Daniel Menaker (The Talk of the Town, p. 26), a former *New Yorker* editor and a longtime contributor, was until recently the editor-in-chief of Random House. He is the author of two collections of stories and a novel, "The Treatment."

Charles Simic (Poem, p. 69), a poet, essayist, and translator, has just been appointed U.S. Poet Laureate. "My Noiseless Entourage" is his latest collection of poems.

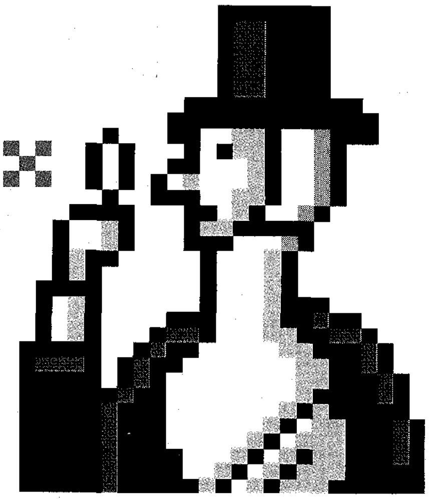
T Cooper (Fiction, p. 70) has published two novels, "Some of the Parts" and "Lipshitz Six, or Two Angry Blondes."

Adam Gopnik (Books, p. 79) is the author of, most recently, "Through the Children's Gate: A Home in New York."

Joan Acocella (Dancing, p. 84) reviews dance and books for the magazine. She is the author of "Twenty-eight Artists and Two Saints," a collection of essays.

Joost Swarte (Cover) has an exhibition of his work at Le Centre de la Gravure, in La Louvière, Belgium.

**THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM**
An audio interview with *Peter J. Boyer* about the appeal of Rudy Giuliani. / A slide show of photographs from the matsutake-mushroom harvest, by *Yola Monakhov.* / Interesting Times, a blog by *George Packer.* / *Dana Goodyear's* Postcard from Los Angeles. / *George Saunders* reads an Isaac Babel short story published in 1966. / From the archives: *Elizabeth Kolbert* on Giuliani, *Anthony Hiss* on Philip K. Dick, and thousands of capsule reviews in the Film File. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events around the country.



# THE MAIL

## OFFICE SPACE

Paul Goldberger, in his piece on the New York *Times* and Bloomberg L.P. newsrooms, reflects the prevailing notion that open space in a corporate environment encourages communication (The Sky Line, August 6th). The late Mike Brill, the founder of BOSTI Associates and a former professor of architecture at SUNY Buffalo, whose research, published in 2001, surveyed more than thirteen thousand office workers, actually came to the opposite conclusion. As Brill often said, "Open spaces do not an open organization make." His research also confirmed that the two biggest deficiencies in current offices (including many that had won prestigious design awards) were lack of support for "distraction-free work" and lack of support for "impromptu interactions." His preferred solution was to design fully enclosed small offices for what he called "solo" work which surrounded enclosed group or team work spaces that gave support to collaborative, often serendipitous work activity. Of course, this approach is usually more expensive up front, and, unfortunately, the corporate emphasis on short-term economics is mirrored in the average office interior.

*Hank de Cillia*
*Sag Harbor, N.Y.*

## FREEING THE MIND

The most interesting part of Oliver Sacks's account of the awakening of the orthopedic surgeon Tony Cicoria's musical talents, after he was struck by lightning, was that Dr. Cicoria viewed his new musical ability as a gift from Heaven, as if the lightning had contained something more than the electrical pulse that almost killed him ("A Bolt from the Blue," July 23rd). I suppose that the "gift from above" view appeals to those with a religious bent, but the more compelling possibility posed by this and numerous similar stories is that we all have an incredible range of potential talents that remain under lock and key under normal circumstances. Humans have long sought to unlock the secrets buried within their own brains with the use of mind-altering drugs, which, unfortunately, can result in disability or death. Someday, perhaps, we'll be able to access these areas of the mind without running the risk of harming our bodies.

*W. Jarvis Phillips*
*New York City*

## DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

William Dalrymple, in his article about the Pakistani human-rights lawyer Asma Jahangir, captures one of the many chapters in the struggle to fight dictatorship in Pakistan—with each one, the dictator changes, but the tactics remain unchanged ("Days of Rage," July 23rd). With this continuing cycle of repression and revolt, one might expect that the policymakers in Washington would come to understand the devastating results of their short-term goals. Yet, as a result of their seeming belief that one strong man in uniform is easier to deal with than a fractious parliamentary system, America's best allies in Pakistan have often been military dictators. Right-wing Pakistani politicians have used these relationships to argue that the United States does not care about Pakistan or its people, and many in the general population have come to believe that Washington is not doing enough to encourage democracy. Pakistan is now rapidly radicalizing, and, alarmingly, it is no longer only the religious fundamentalists in the country who oppose the U.S. (as they always have); rather, it is the general public and the middle class—the doctors, lawyers, and students—who point their fingers at Washington.

*Bilal Qureshi*
*Washington, D.C.*

•

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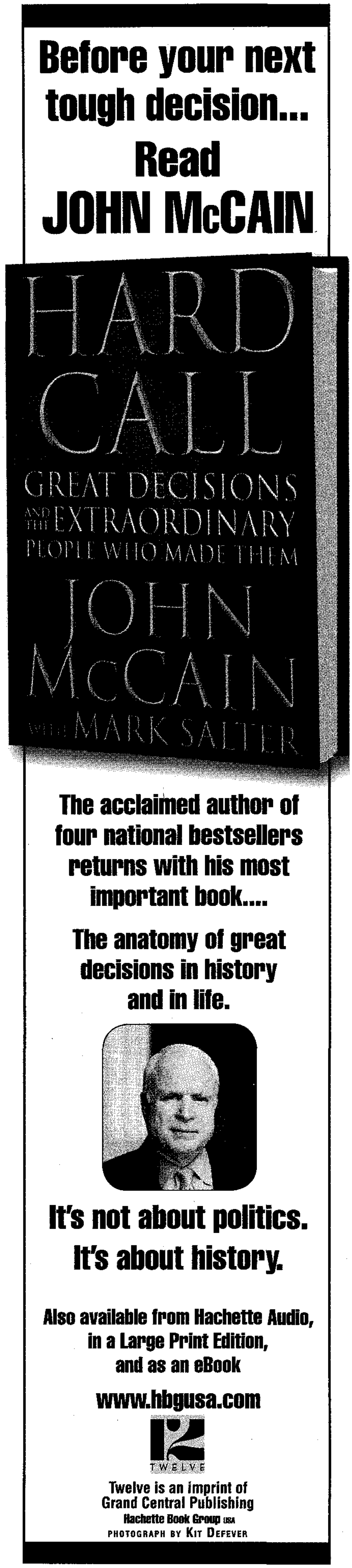
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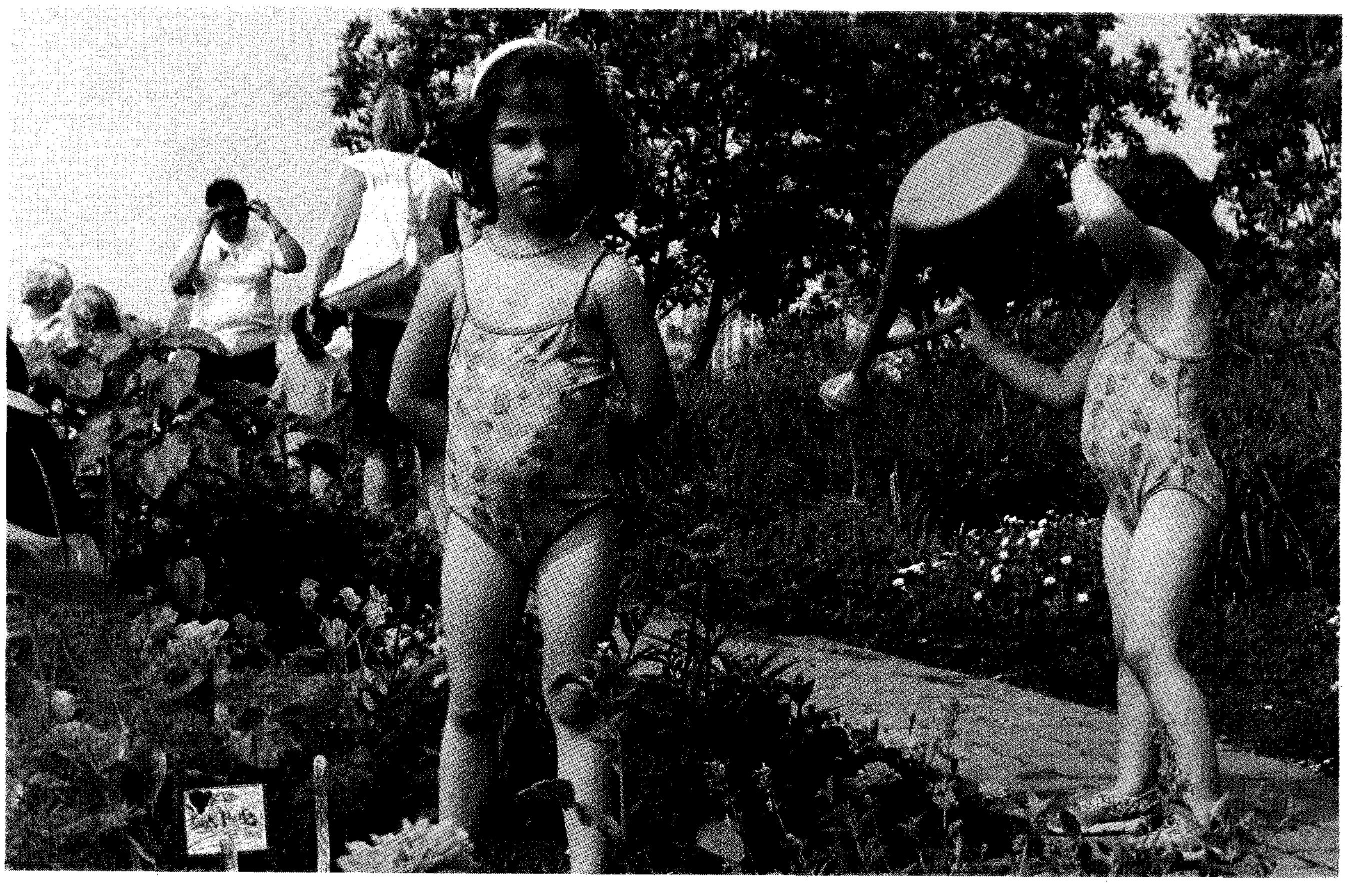

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |

## THIS WEEK

### THE THEATRE
### CAT'S MEOW

"Moscow Cats Theatre" features five Russian clowns and a dog, but the real stars are the thirty-five talented felines. The company returns to New York with a new show, at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center, which runs through December. (See page 10.)

### NIGHT LIFE
### YOUTHQUAKE

The two men who make up Ghostland Observatory, a band from Austin, Texas, favor capes, tight pants, and eclectic electronic dance music that their MySpace page describes as "a robot making love to a tree." They're known for energetic live shows, and this week they come to McCarren Park Pool, in Williamsburg. (See page 12.)

### ART
### BRUSH UP

Richard Pousette-Dart may not be a household name like Jackson Pollock, but his mural-size canvases from the early nineteen-forties anticipate the breakthrough of his New York School colleague by a couple of years. Now viewers can acquaint themselves with the œuvre of this underappreciated American painter, who died in 1992, in a retrospective at the Guggenheim. (See page 13.)

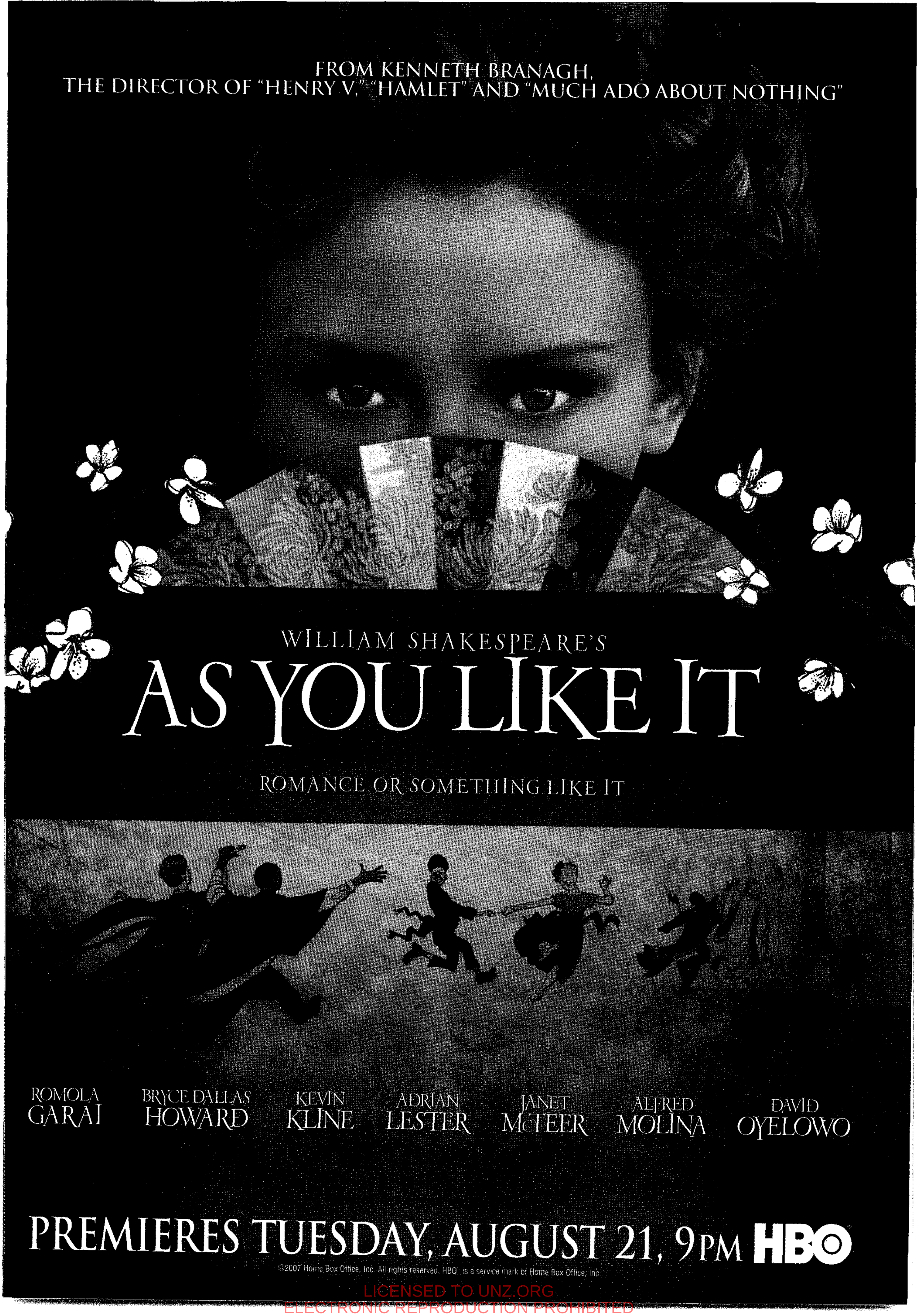
### CLASSICAL MUSIC
### FRESH AIR

The Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival has become significantly more adventurous this year. The final concert of the festival features not only works by Schnittke and Schumann but also "Lipstick," a piece for amplified flute and boom box by the outrageous Dutch pop minimalist Jacob Ter Veldhuis. (See page 17.)

### MOVIES
### MARATHON MAN

It's hard to keep up with the French director Claude Chabrol, who has made more than fifty movies in the past half century. His principal genre is mystery, his main motif is desire, and his great passion is to satirize the bourgeoisie, of which he is a jovial, sardonic member. MOMA offers eleven of his rarest films, including his latest, "The Necklace," made for French television. (See page 20.)

*Battery Park City Parks Conservancy's Young Sprouts Gardening. Photograph by Martynka Wawrzyniak.*



FROM KENNETH BRANAGH,
THE DIRECTOR OF "HENRY V," "HAMLET" AND "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
AS YOU LIKE IT

ROMANCE OR SOMETHING LIKE IT

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KEVIN KLINE
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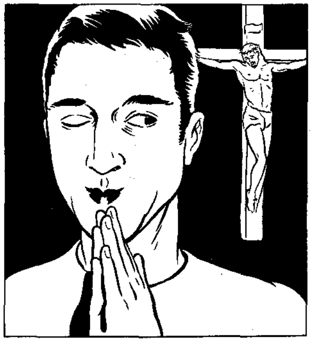
## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## OUTSIDER ART

The New York International Fringe Festival is eleven years old now—not old enough to drive, let alone drink, but certainly mature enough to navigate the city it calls home. Since its inception, the scrappy, seemingly thrown-together event—which this year runs through Aug. 26 and features plays, musicals, performance-art pieces, and cabaret acts from nine countries, including Japan and Australia, not to mention seventeen U.S. states—has always been ambitious but never self-important. As in seasons past, a certain ideology links the works, which take place in theatres ranging from the estimable Cherry Lane, in the West Village, to other venues way Off Broadway: that humor, or drama, instructs as well as entertains. Among the more eye-popping pieces is Matthew Francis's "The Gospel According to Matthew," at the SoHo Playhouse. Starring the author as himself, the play claims to be about Francis's love of Jesus and other men—which may strike you as a contradiction at first, but it makes a kind of sense, if you consider love a religion.



GRANT SHAFFER

*—Hilton Als*

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**THE ALL-AMERICAN SPORT OF BIPARTISAN BASHING**
The political satirist Will Durst presents his latest one-man show. Opens Aug. 15. (New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

**FAIR GAME**
Karl Gajdusek wrote this drama, about a Presidential candidate's campaign and the scandal that her son starts. Andrew Volkoff directs. Previews begin Aug. 17. Opens Aug. 20. (Lion, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**GREASE**
Kathleen Marshall directs and choreographs this revival of the musical, starring Laura Osnes and Max Crumm. In previews. Opens Aug. 19. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

**IPHIGENIA 2.0**
Signature Theatre Company opens the season with the New York première of a play by Charles Mee, inspired by Euripides' tale of Agamemnon, who fears that a costly war is not worth it. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**
Shakespeare in the Park's second production of the season stars Martha Plimpton, Tim Blake Nelson, Laila Robins, and Jay O. Sanders. Daniel Sullivan directs. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

**MOSCOW CATS THEATRE**
The family hit from Russia returns, with a new show featuring astounding stunts by a covey of flexible felines. Opens Aug. 18. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-307-7171.)

**RITES OF PRIVACY**
David Rhodes wrote this one-man show, in which he portrays numerous characters, including a Southern pageant queen and a Nazi German refugee. Previews begin Aug. 16. (Urban Stages, 259 W. 30th St. 212-868-4444.)

**THE SHATTERING OF THE GOLDEN PANE**
In this new drama by Le Wilhelm, two outsiders meet in an abandoned church. Previews begin Aug. 16. Opens Aug. 19. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**WALMARTOPIA! THE MUSICAL**
Daniel Goldstein directs this musical comedy, about a Wal-Mart employee who wakes up in the year 2037, when Wal-Mart rules the world. With a book by Catherine Capellaro and music and lyrics by Andrew Rohn. Previews begin Aug. 21. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100.)

## NOW PLAYING

**THE HANGING OF RAZOR BROWN**
The première of a drama by Le Wilhelm, in which a French teacher and her students discover a noose while on a picnic. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**HUMAN ERROR**
A woman and a man stand at an airplane crash site, surveying the disaster with professional dispassion; they are just doing their job as investigative officers. Miranda (the excellent Meg Gibson), in particular, seems like a seasoned pro. With irony and confidence, she parries the sexual overtures of her subordinate, Erik (Tim Guinee), a hope-springs-eternal adventurer in mirrored sunglasses. In later scenes, Miranda succumbs to his seductive inquiries, revealing the cracks in her emotional armor. Erik's attention makes her come to life, but his callowness threatens her stability. The fine actors bring pathos and complexity to their roles, as a woman who is facing loneliness without self-pity and a man whose confusion and misjudgments only add to the wreckage. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 212-279-4200.)

**ICE FACTORY '07**
The Ohio Theatre hosts the SoHo Think Tank's annual festival of new work, presented by companies such as New Georges and Rindfleisch. (66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444. Through Aug. 18.)

**IDOL: THE MUSICAL**
A new musical about small-town teen-agers who are obsessed with Clay Aiken. Daniel Tursi directs. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 212-868-4444.)

**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**
The Drilling Company presents Shakespeare's comedy, in a parking lot on the Lower East Side. Admission is free. (Municipal Parking Lot, at Ludlow and Broome Sts. 212-877-0099. Through Aug. 18.)

**NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL**
Scores of new plays and musicals from around the world are performed in twenty venues across the city. The offerings include "Slammer!," a musical about women in prison, by Steve Adams and Chan Chandler; "Williamsburg! The Musical," a send-up of the hipster neighborhood; "Champ: A Space Opera," by Jeff Curtin, Patrick Young, and Juan Pieczanski; "Jamaica, Farewell," a one-woman show by Debra Ehrhardt; and Bob Sloan and Steffi Kammer's "The Box," based on Kammer's experience living in public housing while attending the Dalton School. (212-279-4488.)

**OPUS**
Michael Hollinger's drama is a portrait of a string quartet as a four-way marriage, in which the squabbling is lively and the players read one another like sheet music. Dorian (Michael Laurence), the group's mentally unstable violist, has disappeared, and his replacement, Grace (the lovely Mahira Kakkar), is a wide-eyed prodigy unaccustomed to big egos. As the quartet prepares for an engagement at the White House, the infighting intensifies. Along the way, there is an inevitable speech about how music is passion and not just hitting the right notes; nevertheless, Hollinger's deft plotting and shrewdly drawn characters are enough to carry us away, even if the play never grabs for the soul. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**RECONSTRUCTING MAMA**
In this musical comedy, a Westchester family regroups after the death of its matriarch. N. David Williams wrote the music and lyrics; Stephen Svoboda, who wrote the book and co-wrote the lyrics, directs. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through Aug. 19.)

**THE RECRUITING OFFICER**
George Farquhar's bawdy Restoration comedy from 1706, about city folks pursuing all manner of mischief in the country, finds some suitably sylvan locales in northern Central Park—but don't get too comfortable. Beckoned by a violinist and a singer, the audience chases a cast of rambunctious actors on a roundabout tour of hill and dale. The wandering fits the play's erotic meanderings, and, in this playful staging by Grant Neale, Farquhar comes across as giddily contemporary. While caddish officers chase Shrewsbury's country wenches and entrap new recruits to the Army, the proto-feminist Sylvia dons male attire to taste the privileges of the unfair sex. The cast brings a sly freshness to the goings on. (103rd St. at Central Park W. 212-252-4531.)

**SUMMER SHORTS**
A festival of nine new one-act plays, including works by Warren Leight, Skip Kennon, and Tina Howe. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

**TINGS DEY HAPPEN**
A scrappy little white guy channels the whole Nigerian delta in this amusing and thought-provoking one-man show. It's based upon scores of interviews that Dan Hoyle conducted while researching his Fulbright project, on oil politics in the crisis-ridden region—a once fertile area that's been despoiled by Exxon, Shell, and Chevron, with some help from opportunistic cronies in Lagos and the West. (More than half the oil produced there is exported to the U.S.) Tribes that once fished for sustenance find that there's nothing left alive; petroleum spills have poisoned the waters. Relaying the first-person stories of his subjects with a certain flourish, Hoyle gets beyond

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Tickets available at 12 noon E.D.T. on September 15th, at ticketmaster.com, at all ***ticketmaster*** outlets in the New York metropolitan area, or by calling 1.877.391.0545.

Please visit **festival.newyorker.com** to sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails. The complete Festival guide will appear online on September 10th.

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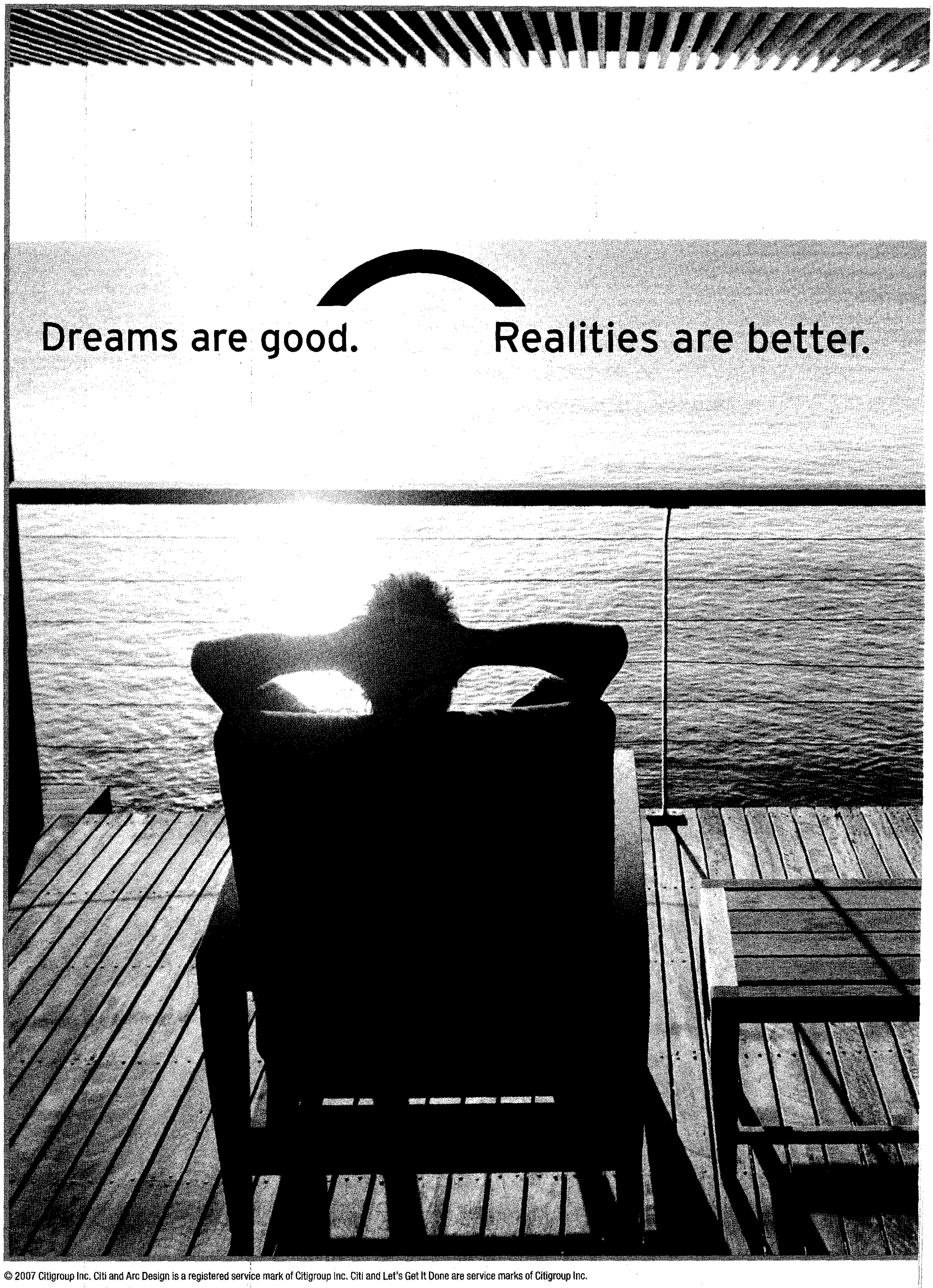
Dreams are good.
Realities are better.

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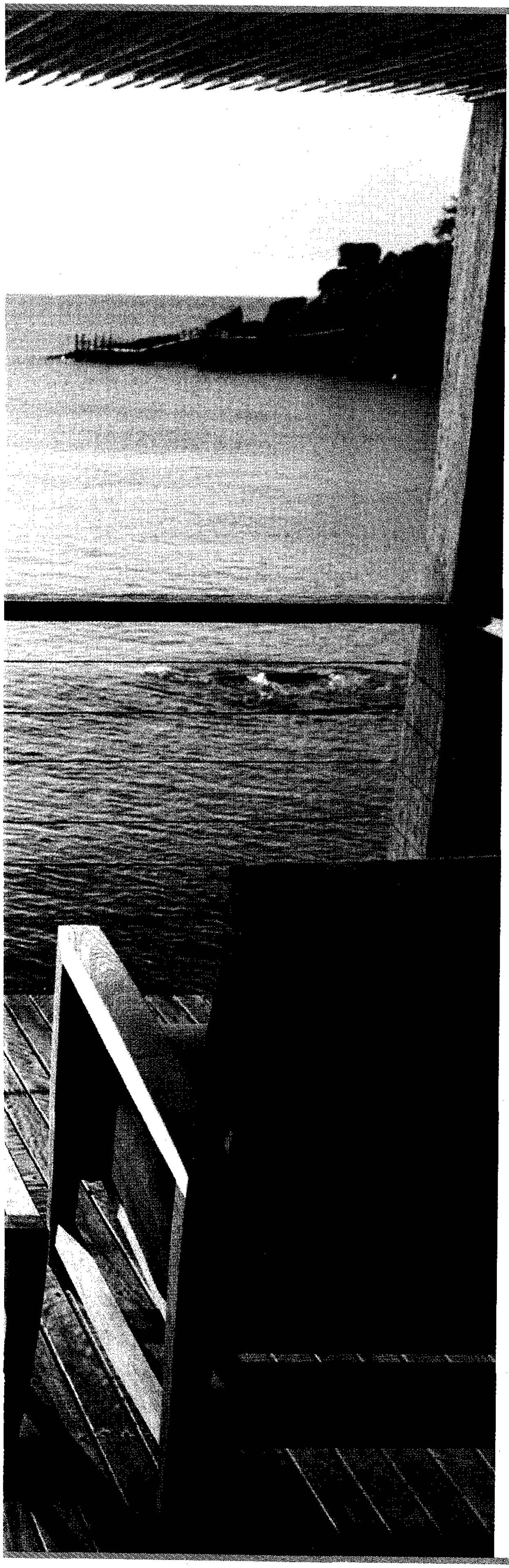

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black and white in his analysis of exploiters and the exploited, and lays out the bitter wisdom of the Nigerian people, caught between a rock and a hard place. (Culture Project, 55 Mercer St. 212-352-3101.)

## OUT OF TOWN

**BARD SUMMERSCAPE**
Ken Roht and his Orphean Circus headline the Spiegeltent, through Aug. 19. (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900.)

**BAY STREET THEATRE**
Charles Busch and Julie Halston reprise their roles in Busch's comedy "The Lady in Question," directed by Christopher Ashley ("Xanadu"). (Sag Harbor, N.Y. 631-725-9500.)

**BERKSHIRE THEATRE FESTIVAL**
Julie Jensen's play "Two-Headed" follows Mormon women living in a polygamist community in the late eighteen-hundreds, through Aug. 18. "Mrs. Warren's Profession," directed by Anders Cato, continues its run, and "Educating Rita," directed by Richard Corley, opens Aug. 21. For more information, visit www.berkshiretheatre.org. (Stockbridge, Mass. 413-298-5576.)

**HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**
On the tented outdoor stage at Boscobel, "Richard III," directed by Terrence O'Brien, plays through Aug. 18, in repertory with "As You Like It," directed by Kurt Rhoads. For more information, visit www.hvshakespeare.org. (Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575.)

**WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL**
"The Physicists," directed by Kevin O'Rourke, closes Aug. 18. "Crimes of the Heart," directed by Kathleen Turner, plays through Aug. 19, and Lillian Hellman's "The Autumn Garden," starring Allison Janney, Mamie Gummer, Elizabeth Franz, and Jessica Hecht, opens Aug. 15. For a full schedule, visit www.wtfestival.org. (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)

### *Also Playing*

**ABSINTHE:** Pier 17, South Street Seaport. 212-279-4200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE BLACK EYED:** New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200. Through Aug. 19. **THE BRIG:** Living Theatre, 19-21 Clinton St. 212-352-3101. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **A CHORUS LINE:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COLOR PURPLE:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **CURTAINS:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DEUCE:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Aug. 19. **THE DROWSY CHAPERONE:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100. **EURYDICE:** Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. **THE FANTASTICKS:** Snapple Theatre Center, 210 W. 50th St. 212-307-4100. **FROST/NIXON:** Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Aug. 19. **GONE MISSING:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 220 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MASKED:** DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **OLD ACQUAINTANCE:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. Through Aug. 19. **SEUSSICAL:** Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-332-0001. Through Aug. 17. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **33 TO NOTHING:** Wild Project, 195 E. 3rd St. 212-352-3101. **TOM CREAN: ANTARCTIC EXPLORER:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

*Suphala brings her intoxicating tabla playing to Joe's Pub.*

MATTHU PLACEK

## NIGHT LIFE
## ROCK AND POP

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Aug. 16: In the eighties, the **Fabulous Thunderbirds** injected a jolt of authentic Texas R. & B. into an era otherwise preoccupied with all things prefabricated and synthesized. Kim Wilson was a commanding presence on vocals, and the guitarist Jimmie Vaughn (the older brother of the late Stevie Ray Vaughn) drove a mean sound. The T-Birds scored Top Ten hits with "Wrap It Up" and "Tuff Enuff" before Vaughn left to pursue a solo career, in 1989. Wilson, meanwhile, has continued to front the band. Aug. 21: A night of dark progressive metal with an air of exotica, as South Carolina's **Nile**, Taipei's **Chthonic**, and the local boys in **Skinless** share a stage. Nile splices its relentless thunder with elements of Middle Eastern music. Chthonic stamps its cacophonous rage with a Taiwanese signature. Skinless, for its part, just makes a whole lot of angry noise and hates pretty much everybody.

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Aug. 18: The local indie-pop band **Bishop Allen** celebrates the release of its new record, "The Broken String." With **Page France**, whose leader, Michael Nau, writes expansive tunes with a folk core, a pop appeal, and spiritual overtones. Nau sings and a sizable cast of his friends flesh out the songs on organ, guitar, xylophone, bells, and vocals.

**HIGHLINE BALLROOM**
431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—Aug. 15: The **Wailers**, the Jamaican outfit that once backed reggae's greatest ambassador, Bob Marley. Aug. 17: The **Sleepytime Gorilla Museum**, formed from the ashes of the legendary and now sadly defunct Bay Area group Idiot Flesh, combines killer musicianship with some truly inspired bombast. Their wildly varied songs—pieces, really—range from manic orchestrations reminiscent of Edgard Varèse to staid, haunting vocal melodies accompanied by eerie percussion instruments.

**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Aug. 15: The tabla player **Suphala**, who studied under the masters Ustad Allarakha and Ustad Zakir Hussain, takes her instrument deep into the pop realm. Early in her career, she toured with Perry Farrell, and she's played with everyone from Norah Jones to Vernon Reid (both of whom appeared on her début album, "The Now," two years ago). Her latest release, "Blueprint," includes a contribution from Edie Brickell. Aug. 17: The **Choro Ensemble** explores that nineteenth-century urban Brazilian form, which incorporates polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, and African rhythms. Aug. 20: **Eisley**, five precocious siblings from Texas whose epic songs sound like a cross between the Cardigans and Coldplay.

**JONES BEACH**
Wantagh, N.Y. (212-307-7171)—Aug. 15: **Linkin Park.** On their third album, "Minutes to Midnight," the nu-metal veterans have shifted their focus from inner youthful angst to global turmoil, and they seem eager to snatch U2's well-worn mantle as the biggest band in the world with a conscience. (Bono, meanwhile, has not looked concerned.) With **My Chemical Romance, Taking Back Sunday,** and others. Aug. 18: Cruel teasing reaches new heights, as the ersatz supergroup **Velvet Revolver** splits a bill with the re-formed **Alice in Chains.** Velvet Revolver is still trying to escape the shadow of its members' former affiliations, which include Guns N' Roses and Stone Temple Pilots. They have a second album to promote, "Libertad," but the hits by their other bands will probably generate more enthusiasm. Alice in Chains' original singer, Layne Staley, died in 2002, and, without his signature vocals, old glories may remain elusive.

**MADISON SQUARE GARDEN**
Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Aug. 15-16: A thorn in the side of those who believed that the boy-band phenomenon wouldn't yield anything of worth, the pop juggernaut **Justin Timberlake** has moved beyond the ranks of his jumpsuit-wearing former peers and achieved bona-fide superstardom. Though much of the appeal of his popular 2006 solo album, "FutureSex/LoveSounds," comes via the hip-hop producer Timbaland, credit must be given where credit is due.

**MCCARREN PARK POOL**
Lorimer St. between Bayard St. and Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (212-307-7171)—Aug. 15: The **Disco Biscuits** may have a silly name, but they're serious about their music. Seriously groovy, that is. Formed in the mid-nineties, at the University of Pennsylvania, the Biscuits have risen to the top of the jam-band scene through hard work and thoughtful experimentation. In concert, they've been known to mix classical and jazz passages into their electronica-fuelled sets. With the eager Midwestern jam band **Umphrey's McGee.** Aug. 19: **Ghostland Observa-**

**tory,** a long-haired duo from Austin, Texas, is known for kinetic performances that get crowds up and moving on their feet. With the multi-textured electronic dance music of **Yacht,** one of the many guises of the Portland-based blogger, producer, and all-around beat wrangler Jona Bechtolt. Also scheduled are popping-and-locking d.j. sets by **DJ Ayres, Cosmo Baker, DJ Eleven,** and the **Baltimore Base Connection.** (For more information about this show, visit www.thepoolparties.com.)

**MERCURY LOUNGE**
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Aug. 21: The **Section Quartet,** an ambitious gang from Los Angeles who bill themselves as the loudest string quartet on the planet, sticks to a strict diet of Led Zeppelin, Tool, Radiohead, and other rock acts.

**RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART**
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000, ext. 344)—Aug. 17: **Lucy Kaplansky,** a folk-music veteran who was once a clinical psychiatrist, has a fetching voice and an insightful perspective on the human condition.

**SPIEGELTENT**
Pier 17, South Street Seaport (212-279-4200)—Aug. 15: **Kaki King** traffics in down-to-earth music that's marked by her unique voice and unconventional acoustic-guitar playing.

**WARSAW**
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (212-307-7171)—Aug. 19: **Wolf Parade,** an indie-rock band from Montreal, has been touted as the next big thing from Canada, which in certain circles is quite impressive. (In recent years, their home city has become a hotbed of musical action.) The band is currently working on a follow-up to its first album, "Apologies to the Queen Mary."

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—The saxophonist **James Moody** (here with his quartet Aug. 15-18) is among the last of the distinguished stylists to be directly influenced by Charlie Parker's bebop innovations. A spry octogenarian, he still spikes his harmonically dense saxophone and flute excursions with right-side-of-the-brain humor.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Aug. 14-19: **Kenny Werner,** a pianist, composer, and jazz educator deserving of wider public attention, presents a typically ambitious new project, "Delirium Blues," in collaboration with the singer **Roseanna Vitro.** Among the heavyweight players involved are **James Carter, Randy Brecker, John Patitucci,** and **Ray Anderson.**

**DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA**
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Aug. 14-19 and Aug. 21-26: A tribute to the bossa-nova composer Antonio Carlos Jobim and to Stan Getz, the masterly tenor saxophonist who helped popularize the genre here in the mid-sixties, won't be much of a stretch for the rhythmically alert **Trio da Paz** or its featured guest, the Getz-obsessed saxophonist **Harry Allen.**

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Aug. 16-18: The **Archie Shepp** quartet. Even when he was a sixties free-jazz tenor-sax provocateur, Shepp would acknowledge tradition by occasionally luxuriating in, say, a lusty Ben Webster tribute or by recharging an Ellington tune. These days, Shepp has no qualms about embracing jazz in all its diversity; his quartet gains further versatility by featuring the pianist and singer **Amina Claudine Myers.** Aug. 19: The **Ed Palermo Big Band** continues its ongoing project of separating the crafted compositions of Frank Zappa from the cult of subversive personality that surrounds the late rock icon. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Aug. 16-19: The most persuasive elements of sixties modal bop can still be found in the work of the veteran pianist **Larry Willis.** Like Eddie Henderson, Gary Bartz, and other similarly rejuvenated peers, Willis has retained his energy and unearthed new depths of meaning in his improvisations. His quintet is anchored by a vital rhythm section made up of the bassist **Eddie Gomez** and the drummer **Billy Drummond.**

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Aug. 14-19: The saxophonist and flute player **Steve Wilson,** who has been a key part of Chick Corea's ensemble Origin and Maria Schneider's big band, gets to express his personal vision with his own quartet, which includes the pianist **Danny Grissett.**

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

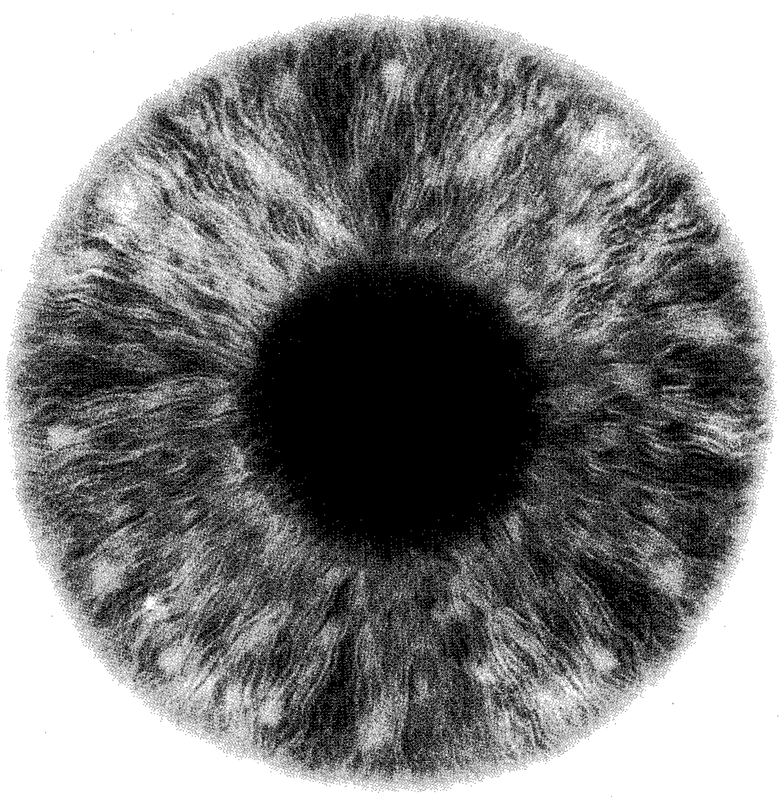
**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Impressionist and Early Modern Paintings: The Clark Brothers Collect."** Through Aug. 19. ♦ **"Frank Stella on the Roof."** Through Oct. 28. ♦ **"Neo Rauch at the Met: Para"** presents new paintings by the Leipzig-based artist. Through Oct. 14. ♦ **"Hidden in Plain Sight."** This canny, compact show of photographs from the museum's permanent collection rounds up mostly contemporary works by artists who uncover visual poetry in the mundane. Gabriel Orozco sets a tone of playful serendipity with color images of kites snagged in a leafless tree, sand piled high on a small wooden table, and the circle that a dog's busy tail makes in the dirt. Elsewhere, William Eggleston's overstuffed freezer compartment, Carrie Mae Weems's mattress springs in the woods, Shomei Tomatsu's flotsam on the beach, and Stephen Shore's wordless billboard landscape invite viewers to be just as alert to unexpected pleasures. Through Sept. 3. ♦ **"One of a Kind: The Studio Craft Movement."** Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years."** Through Sept. 10. ♦ **"Picasso's 'Demoiselles d'Avignon' at 100."** Through Aug. 27. ♦ **"Present Tense: Photographs by JoAnn Verburg."** Through Nov. 5. ♦ Although the big color photographs in **"Barry Frydlender: Place and Time"** have a terrific narrative impact, it's not immediately apparent that they are also technical tours de force. The panoramic images of contemporary Israeli life have been digitally collaged from hundreds of pictures, so that incidents spread out over time appear as one compressed, complex moment. Jeff Wall is the most obvious precursor, and Frydlender has a similar feel for the weight of history, but his approach is essentially photojournalistic. His best work, whether it involves a peace rally, a police raid, a confrontation in the Gaza Strip, or a milling crowd of young people on the make, combines the substance and immediacy of reportage with the subtlety of fiction. Through Sept. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8. The museum will be open until 9 on Thursday evenings through Aug. 30.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"The Shapes of Space."** Through Sept. 5. ♦ **"Richard Pousette-Dart."** Aug. 17 through Sept. 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—Luxury and ruin keep close company in **"Rudolf Stingel."** Through Oct. 14. ♦ **"Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era."** Through Sept. 16. ♦ **"Resistance Is . . . ."** Through Sept. 2. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM AT ALTRIA**
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2453)—**"Matthew Brannon: Where Were We."** Through



Aug. 26. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Gold."** Through Aug. 19. ♦ **"Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, and Mermaids."** Through Jan. 6. ♦ The recently opened Anne and Bernard Spitzer Hall of Human Origins explores the science of evolution. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

**AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—**"The Great Cover-Up: American Rugs on Beds, Tables, and Floors."** Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 7:30.)

the pair has topped telephone poles with colorful pieces of Mylar and installed them at jaunty angles around P.S. 1's courtyard, like Brobdingnagian drink umbrellas. As in years past, water is involved, drenching visitors from above, but only on Saturdays and Sundays, when the space is converted into an outdoor dance party, complete with d.j.s, for the museum's annual "Warm Up" series. Through Sept. 24. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

**QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART**
Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Il Lee."** Through Sept. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

## TABLES FOR TWO
## INSIEME

777 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. (212-582-1310)—Brad Pitt's most embarrassing job, he is fond of pointing out, was at El Pollo Loco, where he was made to dress as a giant chicken. Less famously, Jake Gyllenhaal, as a teen-ager, washed dishes for the chef Marco Canora, who was in the midst of his first big-time gig, at Tom Colicchio's Craft. Canora and his partner, Paul Grieco—following their success with Hearth, in the East Village—opened Insieme four months ago, at the Michelangelo Hotel. The other night, Gyllenhaal called Canora there. "Sure, come on over," Canora told him.

Gyllenhaal brought his mom. It's that kind of place: not too noisy, safe for the parents. Or so it seems. The restaurant's unprepossessing room and unprepossessing locale promise mere proficiency but deliver profligate flavor and spirited service. Take the wine list, compiled by Grieco, and packed with musings about Britney Spears and Pope Bertrand. (It's more enlightening than it sounds.) Cabernet Sauvignon, Grieco writes, is the offspring of Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc, who "apparently got together in the spring of 1456 after a chamber music concert"; reason No. 3 to drink rosé wine (there are nine) is that "Jim Morrison always consumed a bottle before sitting down to write poetry." Whatever Grieco's having, it's powerful stuff.

Sommelier shenanigans aside, the food at Insieme, which the menu lists in two iterations, "Traditionale" (i.e., Italian) and "Contemporary" (i.e., Italian-inspired), is totally serious. But not self-serious—a crucial point. Canora knows better than to mess with *lesso misto*, for instance, serving the boiled meats tender and accompanied by condiments, in the classic fashion. But the man's got imagination. Fish *crudo* (salmon belly, tuna, and hamachi, plus a big, gloopy oyster) is packed into a ring hacked from ice, while the beef-*in-brodo* appetizer is cleverly echoed by an amuse-bouche of "egg-drop soup." Plum soup tastes a little cough-syrupy, but a dish of candied red currants gush when you bite into them and gleam like rubies. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner and Saturdays for dinner. Entrées $26-$36.)

—*Lauren Collins*

**JEWISH MUSEUM**
1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend."** Through Sept. 16. ♦ **"Love and Loss: A Video Trilogy by Neil Goldberg."** Aug. 18 through Oct. 12. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

**MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"From Berlin to Broadway: The Ebb Bequest of Modern German and Austrian Drawings."** Through Sept. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**NEUE GALERIE**
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Berlin Street Scene."** Through Sept. 17. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

**NOGUCHI MUSEUM**
9-01 33rd Rd., at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City (718-204-7088)—**"Survey of Paris Abstractions."** Through Sept. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

**P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER**
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Peter Young: 1963-1977."** Through Sept. 24. ♦ **"Linder."** Through Sept. 24. ♦ **"Young Architects Program 2007: 'Liquid Sky' by Ball-Nogues Studio."** From their Los Angeles headquarters—a three-car garage in Echo Park—Ben Ball and Gaston Nogues design everything from installation art to parties. (They masterminded the launch of Frank Gehry's jewelry line for Tiffany.) For "Liquid Sky,"

**STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM**
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"David Adjaye: Making Public Buildings."** Through Oct. 28. ♦ **"Midnight's Daydream."** Works by participants in the museum's 2006-07 artists-in-residence program: Titus Kaphar, Wardell Milan II, and Demetrius Oliver. Through Oct. 28. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Summer-hours warning: Many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.*

**MARCEL BROODTHAERS**
The Belgian conceptualist, who died in 1976, on his fifty-second birthday, was a great political artist. "Décor: A Conquest," a cunning two-part installation from 1974, proves it. "Décor XIXth Century" juxtaposes Edwardian chairs and candelabra, potted plants, a stuffed python, and a cowboy-movie poster with Napoleonic-era cannons and an Old West six-shooter. (In a corner, Lewis Carroll-ishly, a toy lobster and crab play cards.) In "Décor XXth Century," a jigsaw puzzle of the Battle of Waterloo nears completion on a patio table, surrounded by neatly arrayed modern pistols, assault rifles, and a hand grenade. The insinuated relation of domestic comfort and warfare clicks when you register that interior decoration will never rival tools of death for (awful) beauty. Through Sept. 15. (Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623.)

**KARINE LAVAL / JASON LANGER**
In a show titled "Leisure," Laval's muted color photographs of swimming pools, beach scenes, and ski trails in places like France and Argentina make for an ideal summer respite. Langer's black-and-white photographs strike a more urbane and romantic note. Moody, shadowy, and vaguely retro, his pictures of a female nude, an amorous couple, a jazz singer, and "Moonlight Over Montmartre," all made in the past decade, look as though they might have appeared in some sophisticated men's magazine from the fifties. Langer's work has genuine charm, but, too often, photographs that strive for timelessness feel merely secondhand. Through Sept. 15. (Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007.)

**"OLD SCHOOL"**
The lately resurgent cachet of Old Masters lends promise to a show of painters from seven centuries: John Currin, Elizabeth Peyton, and Michaël Borremans, among the living, cheek by jowl with Lucas Cranach, the Elder and Younger Brueghels, and the schools of Caravaggio and of Fontainebleau. The payoff proves that technique is fungible—painting may be done as well now as ever—but civilization is not. The contemporary crew comes off as jittery kids among peremptory grown-ups. Some make the most of it. Currin's "Lobster"—still-life elements heaped on the face of an elegant woman—expresses a yen for bygone greatness which is so crazily desperate it's noble. Through Aug. 31. (Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677.)

**"TEXT MESSAGES"**
Thirty-two artists forgo the BlackBerry in favor of comic-book pages, calligraphic musings, typewriter drawings, and tongue-in-cheek signs. Joe Amrhein's colorful, vertical stack of words on transparent vellum pokes fun at itself—and at opaque artspeak—with the phrase "a grab bag of techniques and media." Annie Attie's cloud of tiny letters suggests but defies legibility, as does a pen-and-ink page of stylized signatures by Saul Steinberg. Joe Brainard and Robin Ami Silverberg contribute diminutive, reliquary-like constructions (Brainard's reads "Sigh"), and Jules de Balincourt's no-frills red text on white panel declares itself a "Corporate Discount Painting." Through Aug. 15. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338.)

**"TRUE FAITH"**
The artists here—painters, mostly—embrace a foggy notion of "faith," encompassing what the curator Paul Brainard describes as "ambiguity" in the work and "openness" on the part of the viewer. What this boils down to here is a range of colorful naïf or fabulist drawings and paintings by Franklin Evans, Jeff Konigsberg, Kanishka Raja, and others. In another era, much of this work would have been called psychedelic, but, at a time when few people cop to doing drugs, art has been recast as a source for a natural high. Through Aug. 17. (Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444.)

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**JOE BRADLEY / ANN CRAVEN / DANA FRANKFORT / KEITH MAYERSON**
Four painters share an approach that is earnestly expressive yet mediated. Mayerson renders Anne Frank's bedroom as lushly decorative interiors, using impasto as thick as buttercream. Craven's small, melancholy canvases of black birds and pink blossoms on branches, based on commercial photographs, are oddly enhanced by the piles of cardboard boxes (holding four hundred paintings) that she placed on the floor. Bradley's multi-panel brown monochromes are at home with the cartons as well. The words "either way," scrawled into the messily gestural surface of one of Frankfort's colorful works, send an ambiguous mes-

sage that might be ingratiating or detached. Through Aug. 24. (Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700.)

**"AGITATION AND REPOSE"**
If you were at the gym, it might be called "exertion and relaxation." Here, more elegantly phrased, the idea is both literal and metaphoric. Rainer Ganahl's video, shot from the handlebars of a bike while he was riding against traffic in Bucharest, offers an adrenaline jolt, while Ragna Róbertsdóttir's "Lava Landscape," pebbles of volcanic rock affixed to a wall, is a visual soother. The best works combine the conditions of agitation and repose, as in Roman Signer's clever concept videos and Diana Al-Hadid's spiralling sculpture "Portal to a Black Hole." Over all, the curators, Sabine Russ and Gregory Volk, succeed in creating an atmosphere in which anticipation is never too far from dread. Through Aug. 17. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

**"CIRCA 70"**
Coincidence? Close to four decades ago, the veteran Surrealist Louise Bourgeois and the precocious postminimalist Lynda Benglis, thirty years apart in age, produced some remarkably similar-looking sculpture: gelatinous forms in bronze, latex, and plastic (Bourgeois), and in wax, polyurethane foam, lead, bronze, and whatnot (Benglis). Coincidence! The older artist's carnal metaphors and the younger's bald factuality are worlds apart aesthetically. But, in these works, the two share a spirit—an audacious femaleness—alive to the Zeitgeist of the aborning women's movement. Their evenly matched talents make for a furious intergenerational contest, in which both—and the viewer—win. Through Aug. 31. (Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.)

**"EASY RIDER"**
Some of the best American photographs, including many classics and clichés, were taken on the road. Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Dorothea Lange, Garry Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, and Stephen Shore, most of whom lit out for the territory when it was still fresh ground, are gathered here alongside younger and less predictable travellers, including Justine Kurland, Tim Davis, and Alec Soth. Often, the landscape is seen in passing, as if from a car window; Ed Ruscha's views of gas stations along the Texas Panhandle and Danny Lyon's shot of a wind-whipped motorcyclist on a Louisville bridge capture the restlessness of car culture. Through Sept. 8. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

**"LATE LIBERTIES"**
A dozen youngish painters mount a challenge to the recent ascendancy of figuration, with abstract works that range from the woozy expressionism of Daniel Heidence to Carrie Moyer's vaguely archetypal forms and Michael Zahn's architectonic approach. A "How'd they do that?" conundrum accompanies paintings by Augusto Arbizo (the show's curator), Tauba Auerbach, Jeff Elrod, Kim Fisher, and Raha Raissnia. The hand of the artist is evident, but there's also an intimation of a digital or stencil assist. Just as in the days of vanishing-point perspective or Pointillism, the secret of the trickery remains beyond reach. Through Aug. 24. (Connelly, 625 W. 27th St. 212-337-9563.)

**"PROJECT FOR A REVOLUTION IN NEW YORK"**
The maverick art dealer Mitchell Algus curates a show of works by little-known Europeans from the sixties and seventies. As usual, Algus's taste is quirky, retro, and impeccably offbeat. Standouts include Domenico Gnoli's canvases, in which braided hair and a knotted tie become nearly abstract motifs; Peter Klasen's Pop-Surreal portrait of bathroom fixtures; Peter Stämpfli's fabulous closeup of tire treads, titled "Town and Country No. II"; and Walter Redinger's fibreglass "painting" with a tumorlike bulge emerging from one corner. Photographs by Carlo Mollino and films by Alain Robbe-Grillet, however, lean in a gratuitously sexist direction that drags the paintings down until they seem somehow complicit. Through Aug. 17. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

## DANCE

**"MOZART DANCES"**
Mark Morris's glorious dance triptych, which premièred at last year's Mostly Mozart Festival, returns for a much deserved, much desired encore performance. It's a masterpiece, truly Mozartean in its effortless, pleasure-sharing brilliance. With the pianists Emanuel Ax and Yoko Nozaki once again joining the Mostly Mozart orchestra, the interactions between musicians and dancers, soloists and corps, Mozart and Morris are convivial conversations at the highest level of artistry. Sure to sell out, the event will also be broadcast Aug. 16 at 8, on PBS. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Aug. 15-18 at 8.)

**SMUIN BALLET**
The choreographer Michael Smuin's untimely death, this past April, imbues his company's Joyce season with a poignancy, as his excellent and devoted dancers present a mixed bill that includes his last piece for the company, "Schubert Scherzo." The four works on the program represent the range of Smuin's easy, unaffected style—a fluent mixture of ballet, modern, jazz, tap, and Broadway flourishes. "Obrigado, Brazil" is a sunny and sensual homage to Brazilian music; "Bells of Dublin" is a tap number to a song by the Irish folk group the Chieftains. "Shinju," from 1975, is the oldest work on the program, and, with its tragic story and Kabuki touches, an oddity as well. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Aug. 14 at 7:30, Aug. 15 at 2 and 7:30, Aug. 16-17 at 8, and Aug. 18 at 2 and 8.)

**ROXANE BUTTERFLY/WORLDBEATS**
The only tap dancer featured in Lincoln Center's recent "Slow Dancing" films comes down from the building-high screens to dance, in the flesh, on the plaza below in a free "Out of Doors" presentation. French-born, Butterfly has been exploring her Mediterranean roots lately—virtuosic tap and free jazz inflected with North African traditions, flamenco, and Turkish Gypsy music. (Josie Robertson Plaza. 212-546-2656. Aug. 15 at 6.)

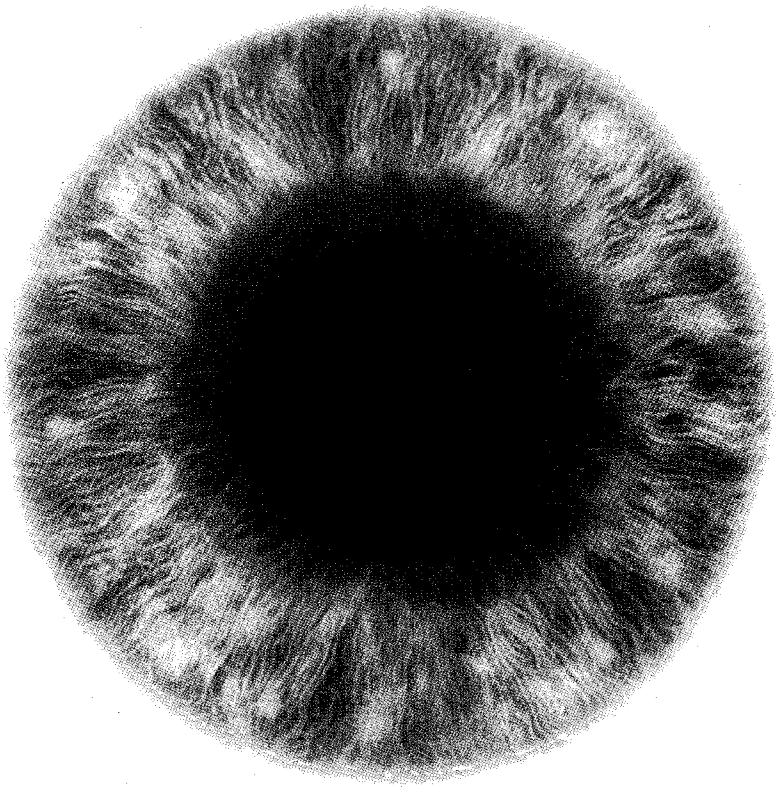
**LULA WASHINGTON DANCE THEATRE**
The African-American ensemble—a Los Angeles mainstay for decades—returns for two free performances in Lincoln Center's "Out of Doors" series. (Damrosch Park Band Shell. 212-546-2656. Aug. 16-17 at 7:30.)

**DOWNTOWN DANCE FESTIVAL**
The long-running festival of free summer performances, featuring nineteen companies, has two parts. During the week, the various participants present daily lunchtime exhibitions in Chase Plaza; on the weekend, they gather for two mammoth afternoon shows in Battery Park. The lunchtime performances begin with the host troupe, Battery Dance Company, and this year include an audience-participation element in which kids are taught segments of the dances. (Nassau St. between Liberty and Pine Sts. Aug. 20-21 at noon. Through Aug. 26. For a complete schedule, visit www.batterydance.org.)

**SOLAR ONE**
The eco-friendly arts association brings a selection of dance groups to Lincoln Center's "Out of Doors" series. The one-day event includes a smattering of short works by young, up-and-coming choreographers of the kind who are usually seen at downtown venues, including the Butoh-inspired Tanya Calamoneri, the mixed-media experimenter Stefanie Nelson, and the Iranian-American Sahar Javedani. (Josie Robertson Plaza. 212-546-2656. Aug. 21 at 5:45.)

## OUT OF TOWN

**JACOB'S PILLOW**
Henri Oguike Dance Company makes its U.S. début Aug. 15-19 at the Ted Shawn Theatre. The Welsh-Nigerian choreographer Oguike has been



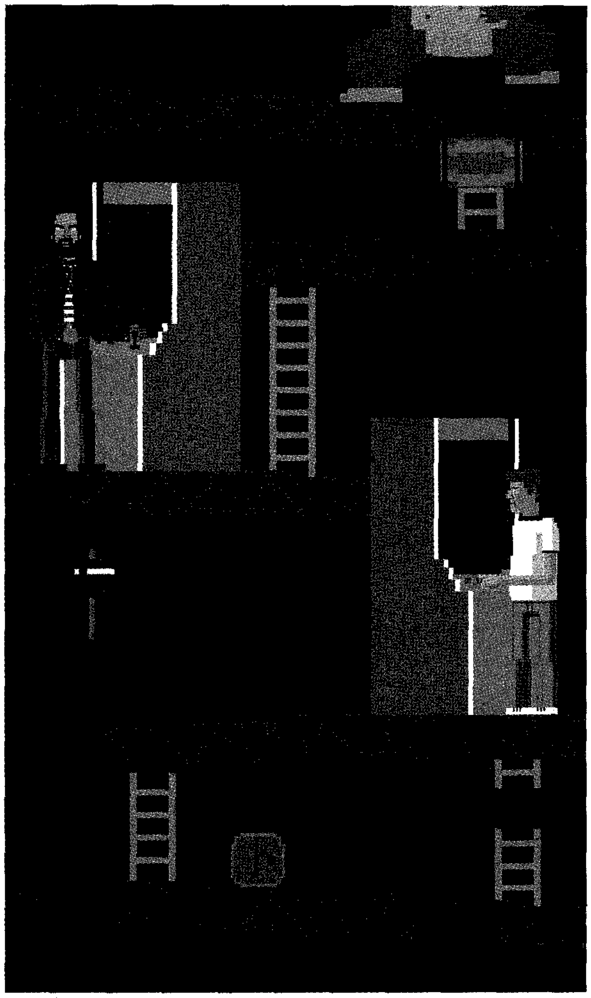
compared to Mark Morris: he's deeply attuned to music, seeking out complex and wide-ranging compositions. The movement that he creates responds not only to phrases and mood but to the actual quality of the sound. "White Space," one of four repertory pieces he is bringing to the festival, captures the raspy tone of the harpsichord with cheeky prancing and posing, while the booming taiko drums of "Second Signal" (performed live, onstage) inspire muscular, athletic heroics. ♦ Aug. 16-19, Bridgman/Packer Dance, a husband-and-wife duo who specialize in a space- and reality-bending synthesis of movement and video projection, comes to the Doris Duke Theatre. In a trilogy of works, accompanied by live music, they interact with each other and with their own virtual bodies (projected life-size video images); in the last piece, "Memory Bank," they take the illusion one step further, by showing delayed images of the performance at hand, confronting both the dancers and the audience with their own immediate past. ♦ Long before the Pillow became a dance mecca, its site was a station on the Underground Railroad. "Invisible Wings," an outdoor performance created at the Pillow by Joanna Haigood in 1998 and reprised this year (Aug. 20-21, through Aug. 25), vividly re-creates the history of slaves making a run for freedom in the nineteenth century. At dusk, audience members walk the grounds, accompanied by a narrator and a choir, as scenes of brutality, struggle, endurance, and escape play out in song, dance, and storytelling. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. For a complete schedule, visit www.jacobspillow.org. Through Aug. 26.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
## CONCERTS IN TOWN

**NAUMBURG ORCHESTRA**
Central Park's Naumburg Band Shell may be somewhat scuffed in appearance, but its Beaux-Arts grandeur takes concertgoers back to the gracious days of the Gilded Age. The last concert of the summer features its eponymous ensemble, a freelance chamber orchestra that will perform attractive works by Britten (the "Simple Symphony"), Respighi ("Sunset," with the mezzo-soprano Jennifer Rivera), Skalkottas, and Tchaikovsky (the Serenade for Strings), under the baton of Jean-Marie Zeitouni. (Mid-Park, south of 72nd St. Aug. 15 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

**MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL**
Aug. 15-18 at 8: Mark Morris's joyful "Mozart Dances," a hit at last year's festival, returns for four performances; the musical accompaniment, which includes the Piano Concertos Nos. 11 and 27, features Emanuel Ax and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, conducted by Louis Langrée. (New York State Theatre.) ♦ Aug. 18 at 8 and Aug. 19 at 5: Seven years after its première, Osvaldo Golijov's exhilarating "Pasión Según San Marcos" ("St. Mark Passion") remains one of the most essential works of the new millennium. The work's original performers—including the vocalist Luciana Souza and the Schola Cantorum de Venezuela—offer the work in two concerts, led by Robert Spano, at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theatre. (Broadway at 60th St.) ♦ Aug. 19 at 9: The members of the Orquesta La Pasión head to the center's Allen Room for a late-night "jam session." ♦ Aug. 20 at 8: Golijov dominates the week not only with his Passion but with his programming. Monteverdi's "Vespers of 1610" is one of his favorite works, and the festival is employing lavish means to present it, importing musicians from Italian Switzerland (the Swiss Radio Chorus of Lugano, as well as the city's I Barocchisti ensemble) and France (the early-music group Les Sacqueboutiers) to perform it at the Rose Theatre. (212-721-6500.)

**BARGEMUSIC**
Aug. 15 at 8: Hefty works by Chopin (the Four Scherzi) and Mussorgsky ("Pictures at an Exhibition") are featured in a program offered by the pianist Nami Ejiri. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8 and Aug. 19 at 4: The violinist Mark Peskanov, the paterfamilias to the barge's brood of talented young performers, joins Ejiri and the cellist Inbal Segev to offer piano trios by Haydn (including the "Gypsy") and Schubert (No. 2 in E-Flat Major). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. For full listing, see www.bargemusic.org.)



*"The King of Kong," by Seth Gordon, opens Aug. 17.*

TOMBY

**SUMMERGARDEN**
The new Museum of Modern Art may be the latest thing in chic, but the programming of its new-music series, rendered by Joel Sachs's New Juilliard Ensemble, is hardy and determined. Their final concert of the summer features works by Jukka Tiensuu ("Ember"), Andy Vores ("Umberhulk," a New York première), and Paul Schoenfield. (14 W. 54th St. Aug. 19 at 8. No tickets required.)

## OUT OF TOWN

**COOPERSTOWN CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL**
The young American pianist Simone Dinnerstein, who has just made an elegant and assured recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations for the Telarc label, performs the work (without intermission) in a concert at the Otesaga Resort Hotel. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 877-666-7421. Aug. 15 at 6.)

**TANGLEWOOD**
Aug. 15 at 8:30: The Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, and Tanglewood Music Center orchestras—and their conductors, James Levine, John Williams, Keith Lockhart, and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos—take to the Shed for "Tanglewood on Parade," an annual cavalcade that features such populist repertory as Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 1, Sibelius's "Valse Triste," and Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture"; fireworks follow. ♦ Aug. 16 at 8:30: An intimate recital at Ozawa Hall of *mélodies* by Fauré, Duparc, Debussy, and Poulenc, offered by one of the genre's great interpreters, the Belgian bass-baritone José van Dam. ♦ Aug. 17 at 8:30: Levine and the B.S.O. are finishing up their annual Tanglewood residency, and they are not going quietly. The first of two blockbuster events features Brahms's First Symphony and, as a prelude, a concert performance of Bartók's one-act opera, **"Bluebeard's Castle,"** sung by the mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung and the bass-baritone Albert Dohmen. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8:30: More opera, or something close to it: Berlioz's "dramatic symphony" **"La Damnation de Faust,"** with van Dam, Yvonne Naef, and Marcello Giordani singing the principal roles, along with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. ♦ Aug. 19 at 2:30: De Burgos and the T.M.C. Orchestra return to the Shed to continue another annual tradition, a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In addition to the Tanglewood chorus, the featured singers are Melanie Diener, Mary Phillips, Marcus Haddock, and Raymond Aceto. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

**GLIMMERGLASS OPERA**
Four operas—and an oratorio—on the subject of Orpheus and Eurydice. Aug. 16 at 8, Aug. 18 at 1:30, and Aug. 21 at 2: Philip Glass's **"Orphée,"** the first of his operas ever to be presented by the company, is based on the film by Jean Cocteau. Three estimable singers—Philip Cutlip, Lisa Saffer, and Caroline Worra—take the leading roles; Anne Manson conducts. ♦ Aug. 17 at 8 and Aug. 20 at 2: Monteverdi's **"Orfeo,"** with Michael Slattery in the title role and with Megan Monahan as Euridice; Antony Walker. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8: A delightfully naughty (and musically persuasive) production of Offenbach's **"Orpheus in the Underworld,"** with the fine veterans Joyce Castle and Jake Gardner joining such impressive newcomers as Marc Heller and Joëlle Harvey; Jean-Marie Zeitouni. ♦ Aug. 19 at 11 A.M.: The company offers a concert performance of Haydn's **"L'Anima del Filosofo,"** a lovely treatment of the immortal legend which works best when performed as an oratorio. The singers include Sarah Coburn and Norman Shankle; Manson and Walker split the podium duties. ♦ Aug. 19 at 3: Gluck's **"Orphée et Eurydice,"** presented in the Romantic-era adaptation by Berlioz and featuring Michael Maniaci and Amanda Pabyan; Julian Wachner. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

**PERLMAN MUSIC PROGRAM**
In the autumn of his career, the violinist Itzhak Perlman is pouring his talent into new projects, including this summer school for promising young string players. The most mature of the students—teaming up with such eminent musicians as Perlman, the violinist Donald Weilerstein, and the pianist Vivian Hornik Weilerstein—will conclude their chamber-music workshop by offering a final concert that will feature Shostakovich's Two Pieces for String Octet, along with movements from Schubert's String Quintet and from the piano quintets of Schumann and Brahms. (Old Whalers Church, Sag Harbor, N.Y. Aug. 17 at 7:30. For tickets, visit www.perlmanmusicprogram.org.)

**BARD MUSIC FESTIVAL:**
**"ELGAR AND HIS WORLD"**
Now that Sibelius's reputation has been restored to a level rivalling that of Mahler, is Elgar, another contemporary, far behind? The hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of his birth provides a welcome excuse for Leon Botstein's full-immersion treatment. Aug. 17 at 8: A clutch of the composer's salon pieces are a prelude to more substantial offerings by such contemporaries as the seductive Fauré ("La Bonne Chanson," an expansive Paul Verlaine cycle) and the fascinating Bridge (the Piano Quintet in D Minor) as well as a selection of songs; the performers include the singers Sasha Cooke and William Fergu-

son and the pianist Jeremy Denk. ♦ Aug. 18 at 8: Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in an ambitious all-Elgar concert that includes the mysterious symphonic poem "Falstaff" and the commanding Symphony No. 2 in E-Flat Major. ♦ Aug. 19 at 1:30: In "Elgar and Modernism," the festival takes a sidelong glance at how the late-Romantic master fit into the world of his more "advanced" colleagues. In addition to Elgar's limpid String Quartet, the program features songs and chamber pieces by Delius, Holst, and Walton, performed by the festival's resident artists. ♦ Aug. 19 at 5:30: As a finale, Botstein conducts the A.S.O. and the Bard Festival Chorale in selections from Elgar's obscure oratorio "The Kingdom" as well as a complete performance of "The Dream of Gerontius," an oratorio based on a text by Cardinal Newman that some consider to be his supreme masterpiece. (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900. For a full schedule of concerts, symposia, and pre-concert talks, see www.fishercenter.bard.edu.)

**BERKSHIRE OPERA COMPANY: "LA BOHÈME"**

Maureen O'Flynn (as Mimì) heads the cast in a staged production, with orchestra, of Puccini's timeless Latin Quarter romance; Kathleen Kelly conducts. (Colonial Theatre, Pittsfield, Mass. 413-997-4444. Aug. 17 at 8 and Aug. 20 at 2. Through Aug. 26.)

**MAVERICK CONCERTS**

The bright and brilliant Trio Solisti comes to the Maverick's evocative woodland hall to offer Romantic piano trios by Beethoven (the "Ghost"), Schoenberg (Eduard Steuermann's transcription of the string sextet "Transfigured Night"), and Mendelssohn. (Woodstock, N.Y. Aug. 19 at 3. For more information, call 845-679-8217.)

**MUSIC MOUNTAIN**

The mezzo-soprano Estelle Magowan and the pianist Ted Taylor join the Bergonzi String Quartet for an all-Brahms program (featuring the Piano Quartet in A Major and the melting Two Songs with Viola, Op. 91) at the longtime festival's air-conditioned Gordon Hall. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. Aug. 19 at 3.)

**BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The flutist Marya Martin's classy little Hamptons festival concludes its final week with a program offering works by Schnittke, Schumann (the Piano Quartet), and the Dutch provocateur known as Jacob TV; the musicians include Martin, the pianist Pedja Muzijevic, and the Johannes String Quartet. (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church. 631-537-6368. Aug. 19 at 6:30. For full listing, see www.bcmf.org.)

## MOVIES OPENING

**DEATH AT A FUNERAL**

Frank Oz directed this comedy, about an attempt to reveal secrets about a man who has died. Starring Matthew Macfadyen, Rupert Graves, Ewen Bremner, and Alan Tudyk. Opening Aug. 17. (In wide release.)

**DELIRIOUS**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 15. (Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.)

**THE 11TH HOUR**

A documentary about the changing climate, directed by Leila Conners Petersen and Nadia Conners; co-written by Leonardo DiCaprio, who co-produced. Opening Aug. 17. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**THE INVASION**

A remake of "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers," directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel; starring Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig, and Jeffrey Wright. Opening Aug. 17. (In wide release.)

**THE KING OF KONG**

Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Aug. 17. (Empire 25 and IFC Center.)

**THE LAST LEGION**

Doug Lefler directed this action film, about the young Roman emperor Romulus Augustus (Thomas Sangster), who flees to Britain as the Empire collapses. Co-starring Colin Firth and Ben Kingsley. Opening Aug. 17. (In wide release.)

**LOVE FOR SALE**

A drama from Brazil, about a young woman who causes a scandal in her rural town when she seeks to raise money by raffling off her body. Directed by Karim Ainouz. In Portuguese. Opening Aug. 15. (Film Forum.)

**MANDA BALA**

Jason Kohn directed this documentary, about corruption and violence in Brazil. Opening Aug. 15. (Angelika Film Center.)

**PRIMO LEVI'S JOURNEY**

A documentary about the writer, directed by Davide Ferrario. In Italian. Opening Aug. 17. (Quad Cinema.)

**SUNFLOWER**

Zhang Yang directed this drama, which follows a Chinese family from the Cultural Revolution through recent boom times. In Mandarin. Opening Aug. 17. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**SUPERBAD**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 17. (In wide release.)

**THEM**

David Moreau and Xavier Palud directed this thriller, about a French couple in Bucharest who are kept under surveillance by unknown enemies. In French. Opening Aug. 17. (Cinema Village.)

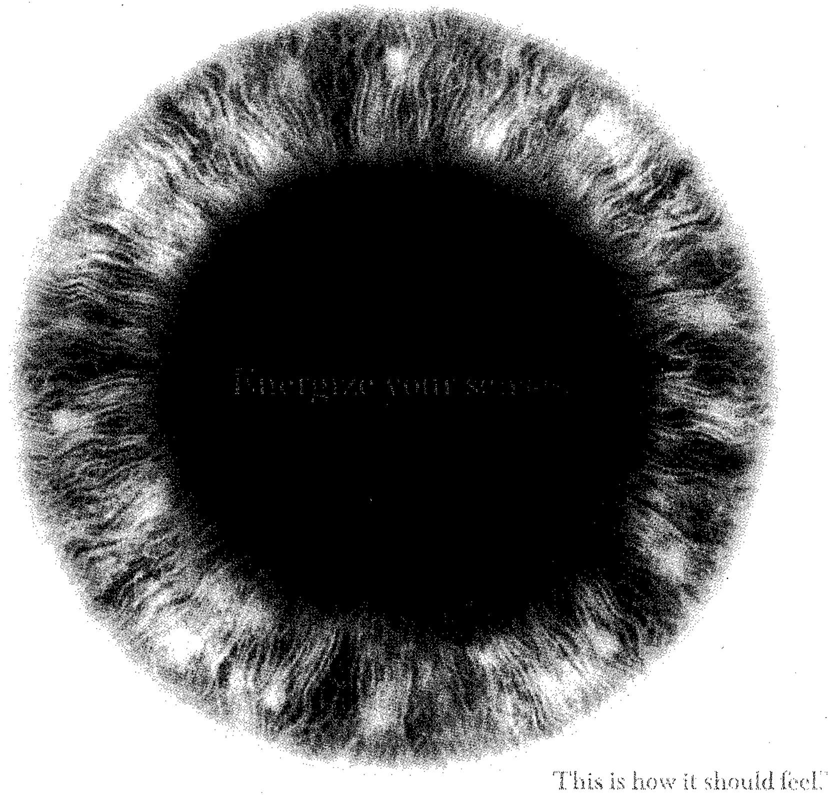
## NOW PLAYING

**BECOMING JANE**

Like much period drama, Julian Jarrold's film aims at bookish and edifying diversion, but in this instance you cannot miss, beneath the polite exchanges and the tuneful dances, the rustling of desperation. Jarrold and his screenwriters, Kevin Hood and Sarah Williams, have decided to treat the life of Jane Austen (Anne Hathaway) as if it were itself the plot of an undiscovered Austen novel, albeit a second-rate one. Jane, stuck in the bosom of her family, meets a boisterous Irishman, Lefroy (James McAvoy), who scoffs at her unripe prose, praises "Tom Jones" instead, and thereby wins her heart. The pair attempt to elope, but fail, and the broken affair duly inspires our authoress to write. This is not just pure speculation but heavy anachronism; Hathaway smolders like a late-Romantic heroine and looks like a twenty-first-century model. (Anna Maxwell Martin, who plays Jane's sister Cassandra, would have been a neater fit for the lead.) Yet the ending, which contrives a meeting between the near-lovers in middle age, feels touched by true regret. With Julie Walters and Maggie Smith, as you might expect.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/13/07.) (In wide release.)

**THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM**

Matt Damon, looking more like a bullet than ever—short hair, blunt nose, no stubble—returns as the out-in-the-cold C.I.A. agent Jason Bourne, who carried out illegal assassinations for the agency, which now wants to get rid of him. As before, agency powers sit at a bank of computers tracking Bourne (who may be a thousand miles away) while he tries to evade their gaze as well as the goons, some working for the C.I.A. and some not, who want to kill him. Eventually, he gets himself in a position to survey the surveyors and hunt the hunters, but all he wants is the return of his identity, which was filched from him during his training. The director, Paul Greengrass (who also made the second film in the series, "The Bourne Supremacy"), composes the movie in tiny fragments, but we see what we need to see, and the result is pretty nearly always thrilling. Some of the chase sequences go on for as long as ten minutes. With David Strathairn and Joan Allen as agency bigwigs. The screenplay, vaguely suggested by Robert Ludlum's novels, is credited to Tony Gilroy (who has worked on the entire series) and many other writers.—*David Denby* (8/6/07) (In wide release.)



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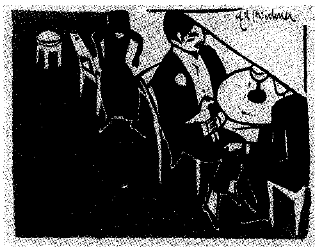
## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
## THE GOOD GERMAN

Last summer, it was "Adele Bloch-Bauer I," by Gustav Klimt, a lovely painting acquired for a headline-grabbing hundred and thirty-five million dollars. This year, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's "Berlin Street Scene" (1913-14), bought at auction for more than thirty-eight million, a record for the artist, boosts the ongoing effort of the suave, tenacious Neue Galerie to raise the value, ineffable and otherwise, of early-twentieth-century German and Austrian art. Anchoring a strong little show of contemporaneous Berliners including George Grosz, Otto Dix, and Christian Schad, "Street Scene" is as good as German Expressionism gets. How good is that? Spiky and crackling, fast but not loose, it pictures two purposefully strolling prostitutes in red and blue dresses, with fancy hats, behind a man seen from the back (a phallic shape) and another (the artist) whose head and hand swivel weirdly askance. The background teems with men riding, or running to catch, a horse-drawn trolley. The top-heavy composition, funnelling energy downward, jolts. But, as usual with Kirchner, show-offy style trumps both formal poetry and narrative drama.

—*Peter Schjeldahl*



ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER, "GENTLEMAN WITH LAPDOG AT THE CAFE" (1911)

**HAIRSPRAY**
The movie version of the hit musical (itself based on John Waters's 1988 film) is perfectly pleasant but not as exhilarating as the show, which distilled our nostalgia for the candied period between Elvis's early work and the arrival of the Beatles. The director of the movie, Adam Shankman, and the screenwriter, Leslie Dixon, have removed the traces of camp and blue humor that gave the stage show its happily knowing flavor. As before, Tracy Turnblad (Nikki Blonsky), a chubby Baltimore teen-ager in 1962, lives to dance and to make out with the sweet, good-looking school king (Zac Efron), and much of the movie feels like a prolonged platter party. The dance numbers, however, are unimaginatively shot, and the idea of substituting John Travolta for Harvey Fierstein as Tracy's hefty mother, Edna (played by the outrageous Divine in Waters's original version), is a blandly earnest betrayal—Travolta gives a sincere, unfunny performance as a Baltimore housewife. With Michelle Pfeiffer in an amusing turn as the hypocritical shrew who manages a local TV station, and Christopher Walken, gruff and tender, as Tracy's father.—*D.D.* (7/23/07) (In wide release.)

**HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX**
The fifth and longest of J. K. Rowling's fantasy books gets the shortest running time, in the director David Yates's economical take on the boy wizard. By focussing the story on Harry (a leaner and slightly meaner Daniel Radcliffe) and his exploits, Yates dispenses with many of the novel's subplots and is able to push the story forward, ominously foreshadowing the dark times to come. The cleanly delivered story line has the evil Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) gathering his henchmen to let loose his powers, while Harry tries to convince those around him that Voldemort is on the march. There are three great treats in this installment of the Potter franchise: Harry's first kiss; the ethereal Luna Lovegood (Evanna Lynch, who won the part in a contest and is extraordinarily good); and the horrid new Professor of the Dark Arts, Dolores Umbridge, played by Imelda Staunton, whose scene-stealing, fascinatingly nasty performance is among the best in the series.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

**HOT ROD**
A goofball action comedy from the sketch group Lonely Island (the "Saturday Night Live" regular Andy Samberg, Jorma Taccone, and the director Akiva Schaffer) and written by Pam Brady ("South Park"). Samberg stars as Rod, a small-town nerd who aspires to live up to the glorious career of the father he never knew, purportedly a stunt double for Evel Knievel. Rod has a crew—a meekly charming bunch of numbskulls (the lovable Taccone stands out)—and an old goat of a stepfather (gleefully played by Ian McShane), with whom he is in a perpetual showdown. The good-hearted, mildly ludicrous humor is held together by plenty of poorly executed stunts—Rod is, of course, an abysmal stuntman. The lovely Isla Fisher elevates her typically underwritten character (the girl) just by showing up, and the action scenes—an extended tumble down a mountain comes to mind—are occasionally pushed so far that they're actually funny.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

**I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY**
This ribald but sentimental comedy, about a pair of rough-hewn Brooklyn firefighters, is "Brokeback Mountain" for the "Jackass" demographic. Bureaucratic fine print requires Larry Valentine (Kevin James), the widowed father of two young children, to find a new insurance beneficiary through marriage, and the only person he trusts is his colleague and best friend, Chuck Levine (Adam Sandler), a notorious ladies' man. Through a series of mishaps, their civil union becomes tabloid fodder—and, to their surprise, an inspiration to gay men everywhere. The result is a heartfelt yet painfully sincere liberal social-problem film that offers a ringing endorsement of gay marriage but, playing to its target audience, avoids any hint of gay sex.—*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

**THE KING OF KONG**
A fascinating documentary about a champion Donkey Kong player (Billy Mitchell) and the up-and-coming rival (Steve Wiebe) who is out to break his long-held record. Mitchell, whose tall, thin frame and dark goatee make him look as though he could be selling time-shares in Hades, defends his title by any means necessary, and Wiebe, a sometimes unemployed nice guy with a family, doggedly pursues his quest to become the new video-game champ. The film, which is populated with snivelling acolytes, understanding wives, and Machiavellian twists and turns, plays like a great Christopher Guest mockumentary, revelling in the deadpan entertainment of the obsessed. Directed, without fuss, by Seth Gordon.—*B.D.* (Empire 25 and IFC Center.)

**THE LIFE OF OHARU**
A fifty-year-old prostitute who lives on the street and can no longer attract men shuffles to a temple with her humble dignity intact. Most of what follows in Kenji Mizoguchi's justly legendary 1952 drama of political and intimate corruption tells, in flashback, the story of the scourging of a pure soul. Oharu (Kinuyo Tanaka), a courtier's daughter in seventeenth-century Kyoto, is caught with Katsunosuke (Toshiro Mifune), a lowly page. Despite their true love, they cannot marry; Oharu and her family are degraded and exiled, and Katsunosuke is beheaded. As Oharu runs grief-stricken through the underbrush when she hears of her lover's death, Mizoguchi's relentless tracking shot, one of many, exalts her desperate, doomed flight from cruel authority. Ultimately pushed into prostitution to satisfy her father's debts, Oharu bears her swift and inexorable decline with a stoic serenity born of the memory of love. Mizoguchi's limpid heartbreaker is also a fierce denunciation of the subjugation of women, the power of wealth, and Japan's unjust though splendid traditions. In Japanese.—*R.B.* (IFC Center; Aug. 17-19.)

**MOLIÈRE**
A bio-pic about the playwright, the details of whose life are surprisingly sparse; whole years are unaccounted for in the historical record, which gives the director, Laurent Tirard, considerable license in laying out a series of imaginary escapades. Molière (Romain Duris), the leading light of a failing theatrical troupe, is hired on a whim by a rich fool (Fabrice Luchini), who needs help composing an aphrodisiac play. The fool has a wife (Laura Morante), with whom the playwright—disguised as a priest—falls in love. And so the complications abound, the idea being that Molière was inspired by actual shenanigans to compose his great farces of later years. Sadly, the film itself is not funny, being far too stolid for either raucousness or grace, and the thuggish Duris, ideal for gloomier fare, is wholly miscast as a wellspring of human comedy. Only Morante and the nimble Luchini leaven the mood. In French.—*A.L.* (7/30/07) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

**NO END IN SIGHT**
The best documentary on the Iraq occupation made so far. This modest, attentive, and outraged collection of interviews, news footage, and narrated history gathers weight and strength and delivers, in chronological order, an overwhelming pattern of folly: In the run-up to the 2003 invasion and in the months immediately after it, all the people who knew anything about Iraq and the Middle East—those who had serious experience in military, intelligence, or reconstruction work—were thrown out and replaced by ignorant ideologues who refused to take advice. The movie may not offer much that's new factually, but it provides what can only be called sensuous rewards—we need to see how badly Baghdad and Falluja have been torn up, and we need to see and hear the losers in the policy wars (including former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Colonel Paul Hughes, and General Jay Garner), who, despite getting things right, now feel guilty that they couldn't do more to prevent the disaster. Written and directed by Charles Ferguson with steady intelligence and cumulative force.—*D.D.* (8/6/07) (Film Forum.)

**PARAGUAYAN HAMMOCK**
Though this film by Paz Encina is said to be the first produced in Paraguay in decades, it has an artistic refinement and an emotional power that allow it to transcend all novelty value and vault to the front lines of world cinema. Its sixty-eight minutes carry Ramón and Cándida (Ramón Del Rio and Georgina Genes), an aging couple living in the deep country, from sunrise, when they hang their old hammock be-

tween two trees in a clearing, to sunset, when they take it in. Settled in its tenuous grasp, they talk about the heat, the rain, the dog that won't stop barking, the war, and their son, Máximo, who is doing his military service and hasn't been heard from lately. The father lives in hope, the mother in fear, and scenes of their daily rounds of labor and rest—images of a contemplative pictorial exaltation—are joined by voice-over flashbacks revealing the story of their son's departure and the rumors that followed. Encina's film, balanced exquisitely between the concrete and the abstract, between the specific and the absolute, is a quietly devastating indictment of the eternal waste of youth as cannon fodder in this and all wars. In Guaraní.—*R.B.* (BAM; Aug. 20.)

### RATATOUILLE

For Remy (Patton Oswalt), the restless rodent who is the leading figure in Pixar's brilliant new animation feature, the omnivore's dilemma can be solved only by eating well. Rejecting the usual rat's feast of garbage, Remy realizes that he needs to cook. Though "Ratatouille" starts out as a minor conceit about a rat who turns himself into a connoisseur, it becomes a gripping comic fable about the implacability of an artist. Washed into a sewer, Remy lands in Paris, where he makes himself known to a young man, Alfredo Linguini (Lou Romano), who has inherited a famous restaurant but cannot crack an egg. Quietly, Remy rides under Alfredo's toque and pulls tufts of his hair, controlling the young man's chopping and sauce-stirring techniques like a master puppeteer. Brad Bird's animation crew is good at so many things (for instance, the geography of the restaurant kitchen where much of the movie takes place) that one is released into the pleasures of the story and the details of culinary lore.—*D.D.* (7/23/07) (In wide release.)

### RUSH HOUR 3

The director Brett Ratner seems like a regular guy, and in this installment of the franchise he holds Jackie Chan's increasingly stiff acrobatics and Chris Tucker's familiar shtick in the mainstream's dead center with a cheerful dose of frat-house jingoism, sexism, and ethnic joshing. The story, such as it is, involves the Chinese triads, and sends the mismatched pair from Los Angeles to Paris, where they meet a suavely contemptuous detective (Roman Polanski), a crudely contemptuous cabdriver (Yvan Attal), and a multilingual chanteuse (Noémie Lenoir). This is filmmaking by the yard, but Ratner perks up near the end and delivers a vertigo-inducing chase through the latticework of the Eiffel Tower. Only the pounding music and sound effects might keep a viewer awake to that point; such formulaic fare cries out for a director with Quentin Tarantino's studious flair.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

### SICKO

In the beginning of Michael Moore's attack on America's health-care system, he records heartbreaking interviews with families who have been betrayed or neglected by H.M.O.s and insurance companies. But then Moore hauls off three ailing Ground Zero rescue workers and other seriously ill people to Guantánamo Bay, where the detainees allegedly get good (and free) health care. The sick Americans are turned away, of course, and the joke seems insensitive. Moore does find some help for the rescue workers in Havana (the other sick Americans mysteriously vanish), and the rest of the movie is devoted to the wonders of health care in Canada, England, and France as well as in Cuba. But Moore accepts what doctors and patients abroad say at face value—as a report on national health services in different countries, the movie is worthless—and he doesn't interview a single American who might have ideas about reforming our own system. Since the majority of Americans want some form of national health care, Moore, for once, seems behind the curve.—*D.D.* (7/2/07) (In wide release.)

### THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

The incomparable gang at full length for the first time, with enough jokes, satire, nonsense, and sentiment to justify the eighty-eight minutes. Homer falls in love with a pig, interrupting the sadomasochistic bond between him and Bart, and pollutes Lake Springfield with pig poop. (The family's home state, in case you were wondering, borders on Maine and Kentucky.) As a result, President Schwarzenegger quarantines the town, prompting the locals to drive the Simpsons to Alaska, where Homer has mystical

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## POP NOTES
## THE ENEMY WITHIN

In the late eighties and early nineties, Public Enemy was the only band that mattered. It was, as these things always are, an unsustainable position. Since 1999, amid the reality TV and the radio shows, Chuck D and company have continued to put out records, but they've been a mixed bag—sometimes exciting, sometimes exhausting jumbles of new material, live tracks, and remixes. Now, for their twentieth anniversary, Public Enemy has released **"How You Sell Soul to a Soulless People Who Sold Their Soul???"** (SlamJamz), and, from the portentous title to the extensive liner notes, it's clearly intended as a return to the group's heyday.

In some respects, it is. Both the title track and the lead single, "Harder Than You Think," wed Chuck D's hammering vocals to dense soundscapes full of surging horns, spoken snippets, and sneaky synthesizer lines. "Sex, Drugs & Violence" employs a children's chorus and a guest verse from KRS-One for a sharp (if familiar) critique of gangster rap. Elsewhere, though, the record is overworked or undercooked. "Black Is Back," which was originally built around AC/DC's "Back in Black," had to be reconceived for legal reasons, and now it sounds less like a throwback to "Walk This Way" than like the hundredth retread of "99 Problems." And, if Flavor Flav's tracks sound like they were cut out of the wreck of his solo album, it's because they were.

But the sonic power of the record is only half the issue. There's also the question of the group's continued relevance. After two decades of saying so much about black America, white America, and America in the world, is there still more to say? "Revolution means change," as "Harder Than You Think" helpfully explains, but it can also mean spinning in place. What if the world doesn't change fast enough? Does a sermon—especially one preached mostly to the choir—have an expiration date? The record is full of these anxieties, and, while they sometimes produce windy self-congratulation ("The Long and Whining Road"), more often they amplify the overarching theme of consciousness and who should heighten it: "At the age I am now and if I can't teach / I shouldn't even open my mouth and begin to speak," Chuck D says on "Can You Hear Me Now?," though the tone is more Socratic than prideful. The album's closer is an affecting jeremiad against video games, bling, ahistorical media, and spiritual shortsightedness. "Time dictates the agenda here," Chuck D howls. "Time is God, time is God, time is God, time is God."

—*Ben Greenman*

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visions with the help of a befurred Inuit woman. Written by the show's creators, Matt Groening and James L. Brooks, among many others. Directed by David Silverman.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

**SOME CAME RUNNING**
When a frigid blond professor (Martha Hyer) tells a lapsed author and war veteran (Frank Sinatra) that he has an exciting talent, it's unintentionally comical. But Vincente Minnelli's 1958 screen version of James Jones's sprawling novel about a literary black sheep in a small Midwestern town develops an irresistible momentum that sweeps aside objections to its campy depictions of culture, both high and low. Minnelli's hyperexpressive camera style, set loose in real locations, makes pop opera out of the rift between the heartland demimonde and the bourgeoisie. Sinatra is sensationally moody (he often was in this era); Shirley MacLaine manages to mine pathos, sweetness, and exuberance from her clichéd part as a gold-hearted factory girl; and Dean Martin, as a sardonic gambler, has a genius for just being himself that turns his character's affectation—never removing his white Stetson—into an indelible signature.—*Michael Sragow* (Anthology Film Archives; Aug. 16 and Aug. 18-19.)

**STARDUST**
A manic fairy tale, directed by Matthew Vaughn, based on the graphic novel by Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess. The film is a rollicking adventure story that combines romance, over-the-seas swashbuckling, supernatural kingdoms, palace rivalries, and echoes of Shakespeare's "The Tempest." For a good-hearted fantasy, it's more surprising and effective than the usual kiddie-matinée madness. Vaughn's direction is steady, if at times a bit rushed, and the story is convincingly delivered with verve and humor by actors who are clearly out to have a good time. The cast includes Michelle Pfeiffer as the evil witch, Claire Danes as a heavenly star made flesh, Ricky Gervais as a shady dealer of stolen goods, Peter O'Toole as the ailing king, Jason Flemyng and Rupert Everett as Primus and Secundus, the heirs to his throne, and Robert De Niro as the captain of an airborne pirate ship who dances the cancan.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

**SUNSHINE**
The British director Danny Boyle has energy to burn, but the effects are most ardent and spectacular when he stays close to home—witness "Trainspotting" and "28 Days Later," set in Scotland and London, respectively. When he drifts away, as in "The Beach" and "A Life Less Ordinary," much of that verve declines. Now he has left Earth altogether, with mixed results. A crew of astronauts is sent to administer a nuclear kick-start to our dying sun. The mission, like the film, falters as they veer from their appointed course to dock with a sister ship: a lunatic risk, as anybody could have told them, leading to fire, murder, suicide, bodily evaporation, and other unhealthy results. Logic is lost in space, the clarity of the buildup is squandered, and the climax of the film, however ravishing, becomes a blur of mystical confusion. With Cillian Murphy as a blue-eyed physicist and Michelle Yeoh as an interplanetary gardener.—*A.L.* (7/30/07) (In wide release.)

**2 DAYS IN PARIS**
A loving but ill-matched couple, Marion (Julie Delpy, who also wrote and directed the film) and her American boyfriend, Jack (Adam Goldberg), make a brief stop in Marion's home town before returning to New York. Their stay is more than long enough, however, to open up carnal and cultural rifts: Jack is bemused by his girlfriend's mother and father—unkempt anarchists played by Delpy's real-life parents, Marie Pillet and Albert Delpy—and nagged by continual revelations of her past desires. The resulting conflict is largely played for laughs, with nods to Woody Allen, but there is a rude harshness in Delpy's approach, a taste for close confrontation, which both sours and enlivens what might otherwise have drifted into an easygoing comedy of manners. Delpy seems genuinely torn between two worlds, and, where the Allen of "Manhattan" was lost in reverence for his city, the Parisienne delivers little more than a bitter billet-doux.—*A.L.* (8/13/07) (In wide release.)

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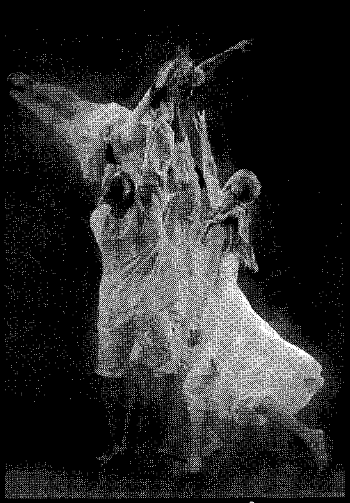


## *Also Playing*

**EL CANTANTE:** In wide release. **CROSSING THE LINE:** Cinema Village. **DANS PARIS:** IFC Center. **ROCKET SCIENCE:** In wide release. **THE TEN:** In limited release. **UNDERDOG:** In wide release. **THE WILLOW TREE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Melodramas by Vincente Minnelli. Aug. 15 at 7, Aug. 17 at 9, and Aug. 19 at 4: "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1952). ♦ Aug. 15 at 9:15, Aug. 17 at 6:30, and Aug. 18 at 9:15: "The Cobweb" (1955). ♦ Aug. 16 and Aug. 18 at 6:30 and Aug. 19 at 8:45: "Some Came Running" (†). ♦ Aug. 16 at 9:15, Aug. 18 at 4, and Aug. 19 at 6:30: "Two Weeks in Another Town" (1962).

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Hong Kong Film." Aug. 16 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "2 Become 1" (2006, Law Wing-cheong; in Mandarin and Cantonese). ♦ Aug. 17 at 3 and 7: "After This Our Exile" (2005, Patrick Tam; in Cantonese). ♦ Aug. 18 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Perhaps Love" (2005, Peter Chan; in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English). ♦ Aug. 19 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Breaking News" (2004, Johnnie To; in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English). ♦ Films from the New Crowned Hope Festival. Aug. 20 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Paraguayan Hammock" (†). The 6:50 screening will be introduced by Peter Sellars. ♦ New York Korean Film Festival. Aug. 21 at 6: "The General's Son" (1990, Im Kwon-taek; in Korean). ♦ Aug. 21 at 9:30: "Chunhyang" (2000, Im; in Korean).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—"NYC Noir." Aug. 15 at 1, 4:25, and 7:50: "Phantom Lady" (1944, Robert Siodmak). ♦ Aug. 15 at 2:40, 6:05, and 9:30: "Cat People" (1942, Jacques Tourneur). ♦ Aug. 16 at 1:20, 5:40, and 10: "The Killer That Stalked New York" (1950, Earl McEvoy). ♦ Aug. 16 at 2:55 and 7:15: "Dr. Broadway" (1942, Anthony Mann). ♦ Aug. 16 at 4:15 and 8:35: "Street of Chance" (1942, Jack Hively). ♦ Aug. 17-18 at 1, 4:35, and 8:10: "Superfly" (1972, Gordon Parks, Jr.). ♦ Aug. 17-18 at 2:50, 6:25, and 10: "The Warriors" (1979, Walter Hill). ♦ Aug. 19 at 2, 5:35, and 9:10 and Aug. 20 at 1 and 4:35: "Side Street" (1949, Mann). ♦ Aug. 19 at 3:40 and 7:15 and Aug. 20 at 2:40: "Scarlet Street" (1945, Fritz Lang). ♦ Aug. 20 at 7: "Manhandled" (1924, Allan Dwan; silent). ♦ Aug. 20 at 8:20: "It" (1927, Clarence Badger; silent). ♦ Aug. 21 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Cry of the City" (1948, Siodmak). ♦ Aug. 21 at 2:50, 6:20, and 9:50: "The Sleeping City" (1950, George Sherman).

**IFC CENTER**
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. Aug. 17-19 at noon: "The Life of Oharu" (†). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Aug. 17-18: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" sing-along. ♦ "Slamdance Documentary Showcase." Aug. 21 at 7: "Off the Grid: Life on the Mesa" (2006, Jeremy and Randy Stulberg) and "Commode Creations: The Artwork of Barney Smith" (2005, Danny Bourque), introduced by the filmmakers. ♦ Aug. 21 at 8:45: "A Dream in Doubt" (2006, Tami Yeager) and "Long Haul" (2006, Erin Hudson), introduced by the filmmakers.

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"MOMA Laffs," a comedy series. Aug. 15 at 6:30: "Ruggles of Red Gap" (1935, Leo McCarey). ♦ Aug. 15 at 8:30: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks). ♦ Aug. 16 at 6: "It Should Happen to You" (1954, George Cukor). ♦ "Automatic Update," films about technology. Aug. 17 at 4:30: "Synthetic Pleasures" (1996, Iara Lee). ♦ Aug.

18 at 2: "8 BIT" (2006, Marcin Ramocki and Justin Strawhand). ♦ Through Aug. 27: "The Other Claude Chabrol." Except where noted, all films are in French. Aug. 17 at 6:15: "The Necklace" (2007) and "Unusual Stories: The Earring" (1979). ♦ Aug. 17 at 8:15: "Fantômas: L'Échafaud Magique" (1979). ♦ Aug. 18 at 6: "Unusual Stories: Invitation to a Hunt" (1974). ♦ Aug. 18 at 7:30: "The Bench of Desolation" (1974). ♦ Aug. 19 at 2:30: "The Color of Lies" (1988). ♦ Aug. 20 at 6:15: "Dr. M" (1990; in English). ♦ Aug. 20 at 8:30: "Masks" (1987).

**MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Uneasy Riders: American Film in the Nixon Years, 1970-1974." Aug. 18 at 3: "The Heartbreak Kid" (1972, Elaine May). ♦ Aug. 18 at 5:30: "Drive, He Said" (1971, Jack Nicholson). ♦ Aug. 19 at 3: "Charley Varrick" (1973, Don Siegel). ♦ Aug. 19 at 5:30: "Play Misty for Me" (1971, Clint Eastwood).

**PIONEER THEATRE**
155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—In première. Aug. 15-23 at 9: "Zebraman" (2005, Takashi Miike; in Japanese).

**RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART**
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Aug. 17 at 9:30: "The Third Man" (1949, Carol Reed), introduced by Kurt Andersen.

**THALIA THEATRE**
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Garbo & Dietrich: Screen Goddesses." Aug. 18-19 at 6: "The Blue Angel" (1930, Josef von Sternberg; in German). ♦ Aug. 18-19 at 8: "Flesh and the Devil" (1926, Clarence Brown; silent).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—The films of Gérard Depardieu. All films are in French. Aug. 15 at 2: "Police" (1985, Maurice Pialat). ♦ Aug. 15 at 4:15 and Aug. 17 at 8:45: "Mon Oncle d'Amérique" (1980, Alain Resnais). ♦ Aug. 15 and Aug. 18 at 6:30: "Le Garçu" (1995, Pialat). ♦ Aug. 15 at 8:45 and Aug. 19 at 2: "Too Beautiful for You" (1989, Bertrand Blier). ♦ Aug. 16 at 1:45 and 6 and Aug. 19 at 6:15: "Under Satan's Sun" (1987, Pialat). ♦ Aug. 16 at 3:45 and Aug. 17 at 1:30 and 6:30: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (1991, Alain Corneau). ♦ Aug. 17 at 3:45 and Aug. 18 at 4: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1990, Jean-Paul Rappeneau). ♦ Aug. 18 at 2 and Aug. 19 at 8:15: "Changing Times" (2004, André Téchiné). ♦ Aug. 18 at 8:45 and Aug. 19 at 4: "Colonel Chabert" (1994, Yves Angelo). ♦ "Independents Night." Aug. 16 at 8: "Off the Grid: Life on the Mesa" (2006, Jeremy and Randy Stulberg), followed by a Q. & A. with the directors.

## READINGS AND TALKS

**MO PITKIN'S HOUSE OF SATISFACTION**
The dramatist Warren Leight, who won a Tony in 1999 for "Side Man," joins Quincy Long, Daniel Levin, Daniel Gallant, and Laura Shaine Cunningham for readings from their new plays and monologues. (34 Avenue A, between 2nd and 3rd Sts. 212-777-5660. Aug. 15 at 7:30.)

**MCNALLY ROBINSON BOOKSELLERS**
Dominic Priore, the author of "Riot on Sunset Strip: Rock 'n' Roll's Last Stand in Hollywood," talks about the Los Angeles music scene of the sixties with the artist Gary Panter and others. (52 Prince St. Aug. 16 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

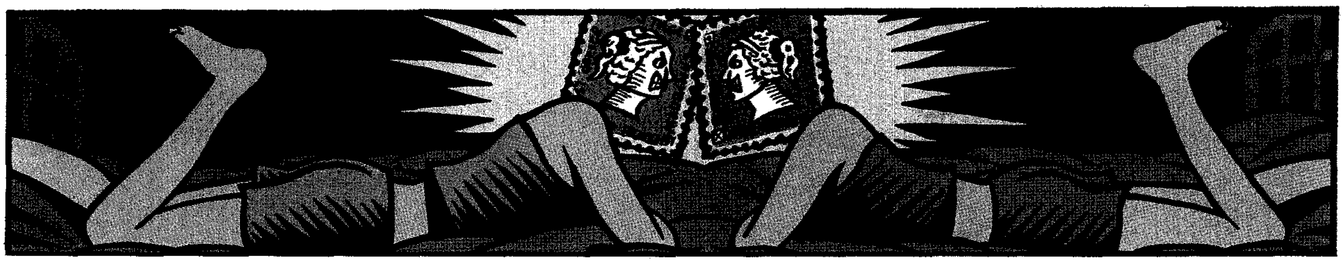
**JESSICA BRUDER**
Bruder, a staff writer for the Portland newspaper the *Oregonian*, reads from her latest work, "Burning Book: A Visual History of Burning Man." (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. Aug. 17 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

**BRYANT PARK**
The Academy of American Poets brings the new U.S. Poet Laureate, Charles Simic, to midtown. (Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-768-4242. Aug. 21 at 6:30.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**AIR GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIP**
For more than a decade, judges in Oulu, Finland, have been giving the private obsession of teen-agers the stamp of global legitimacy. Competitive air-guitar performances, which invoke all the windmill arm movements, theatrical jumping, and otherwise adrenaline-fuelled activities of classic rock (sans Fender, of course), have been organized in this country for the past four years. On Aug. 16, fourteen regional winners, including the reigning U.S. champion, Hot Lixx Hulahan, and the local favorite, William Ocean, face off for a chance to represent the hopes and dreams of the nation at the world championship, in Oulu, later this year. (Fillmore New York at Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 212-777-6800.)

**"OTHER ISLANDS OF NEW YORK"**
Much of New York City is made up of islands and parts of islands, from the high-density real estate to the less developed bits. On Aug. 19, Sharon Seitz and Stuart Miller, a husband-and-wife writing team who have spent a fair amount of time exploring the metropolitan region, lead a boat tour of the southern islands of New York Harbor, including the relatively well-known Governors and Ellis and the man-made Hoffman and Swinburne. (For more information, call 718-788-8500, ext. 208.)



THIERRY GUITARD

## ON THE HORIZON

### MOVIES

### MURK AND BILE

*Sept. 8-30*

If film noir is Hollywood's adaptation of German Expressionism, Fritz Lang, who arrived in 1934, is its founding father. Moving Image offers three weeks of Lang's American films, from the 1936 "Fury," starring Spencer Tracy and a lynch mob, to the 1956 capital-punishment chiller "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt," along with two of his classics from the Old Country, "M" and "The Testament of Dr. Mabuse." (718-784-0077.)

### THE THEATRE

### PHILATELISTS' DELIGHT

*Sept. 13*

The playwright Theresa Rebeck explores the world of stamp collecting in her Broadway début, "Mauritius," a drama about two half sisters who inherit a trove of rare stamps. Bobby Cannavale, F. Murray Abraham, and Alison Pill star in the production; Doug Hughes directs. (212-239-6200.)

### ART

### DUTCH TREAT

*Sept. 18*

To celebrate the quadricentennial of Rembrandt van Rijn's birth, the Metropolitan Museum will exhibit the two hundred and twenty-eight Dutch paintings in its collection, most from the sixteen-hundreds, including works by Frans Hals and Johannes Vermeer. (212-535-7710.)

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

### RUSSIAN ROMANCE

*Sept. 18-Oct. 16*

Lorin Maazel's penultimate season as the New York Philharmonic's music director will indulge in a luxuriant conservatism. After leading an all-Dvořák concert (with Yo-Yo Ma) on opening night, he begins a Tchaikovsky festival that will feature most of the composer's major orchestral works. (212-875-5656.)

### NIGHT LIFE

### ENCORE

*Sept. 19-30*

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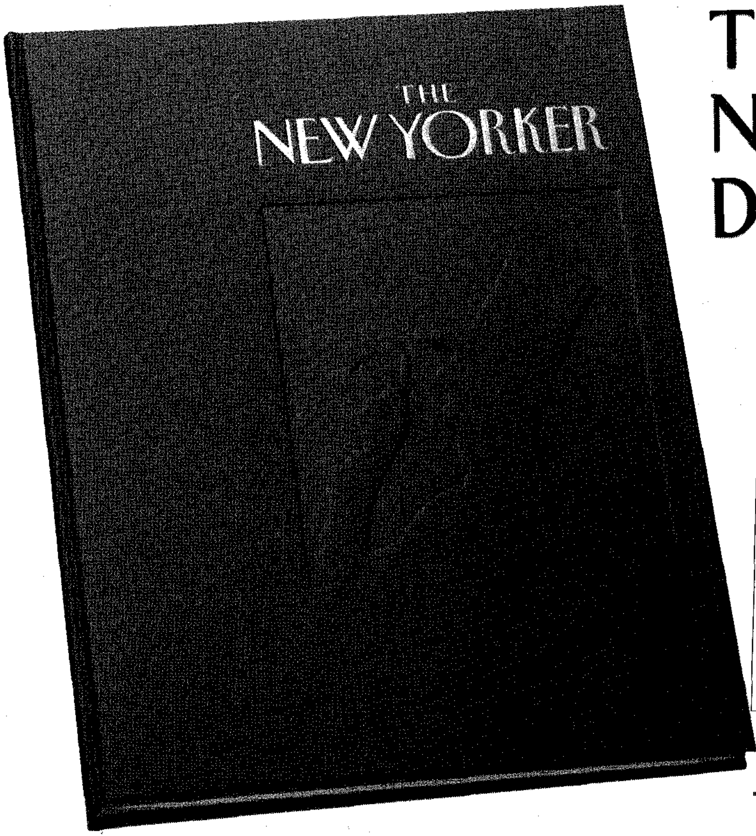

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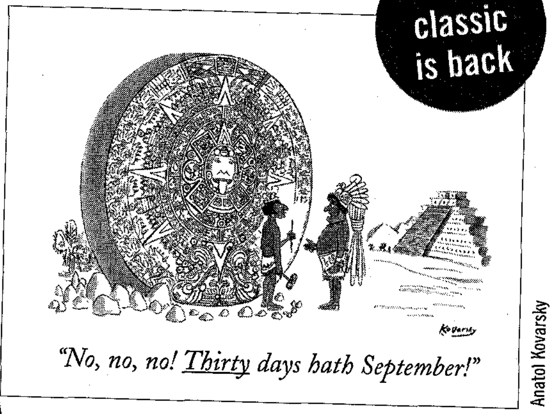

"No, no, no! *Thirty* days hath September!"

Anatol Kovarsky

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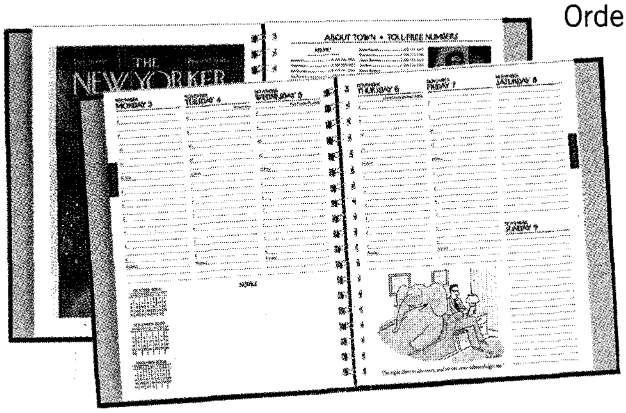

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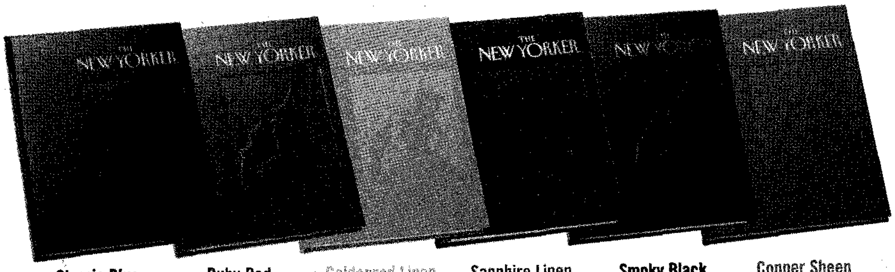

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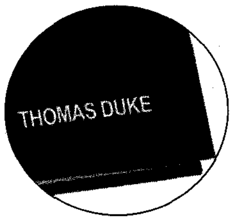

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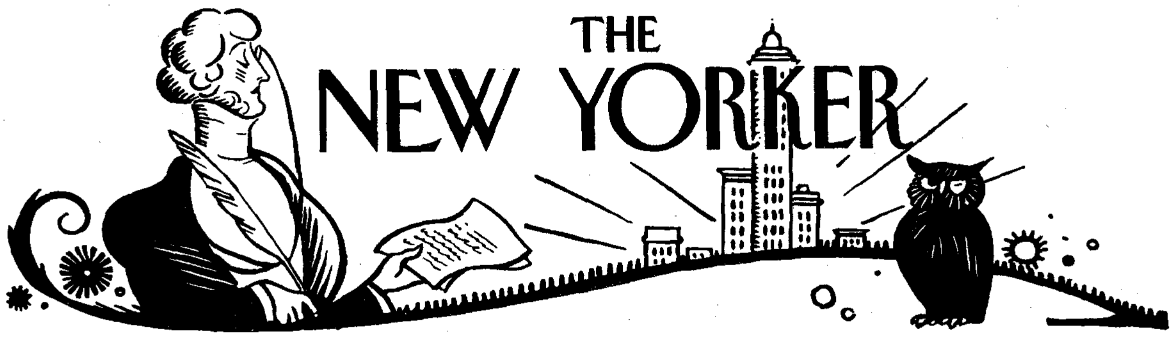
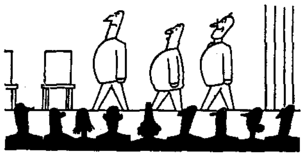


# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## SPARRING PARTNERS



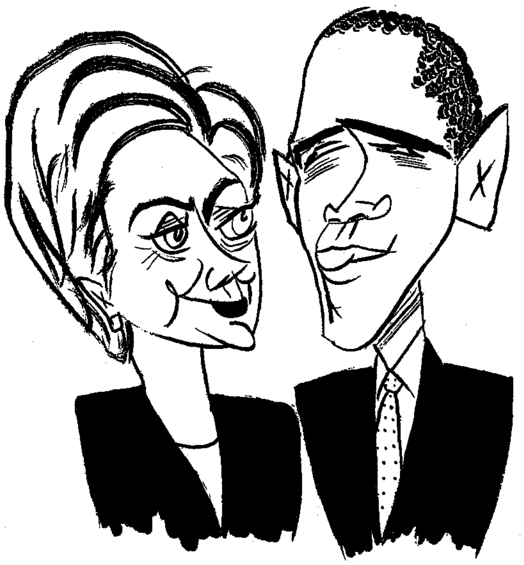
What might be called the Long Campaign has created a demand for news of political conflict, and that demand is being duly supplied. At this preposterously early date in the 2004 election cycle, the candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination had participated in exactly one “debate,” as, for lack of a better word, these overpopulated, overmoderated, your-time-is-up Q&A panels are called. Two cycles ago it was zero debates. This time around, it’s—already!—eight.

The political arena is ideally a marketplace of ideas, but in our country, more often than not, it’s all marketplace and no ideas. Caveat emptor, Democrats. The market pressures in this particular souk almost all push in one direction: making political mountains out of policy molehills.

A case in point is the quarrel, nominally about foreign policy, that the two leading Democratic hopefuls have been carrying on for the past few weeks. It began during the YouTube/CNN extravaganza. A video questioner, citing Anwar Sadat’s visit to Israel, asked, “In the spirit of that type of bold leadership, would you be willing to meet separately, without precondition, during the first year of your Administration, in Washington or anywhere else, with the leaders of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, and North Korea, in order to bridge the gap that divides our countries?”

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Senator Barack Obama, called upon to answer first, said, “I would. And the reason is this: that the notion that somehow not talking to countries is punishment to them, which has been the guiding diplomatic principle of this Administration, is ridiculous.” After noting that Cold War Presidents regularly spoke to Soviet leaders, evil empire and all, he went on, “One of the first things that I would do in terms of moving a diplomatic effort in the region forward is to send a signal that we need to talk to Iran and Syria, because they’re going to have responsibilities if Iraq collapses.”

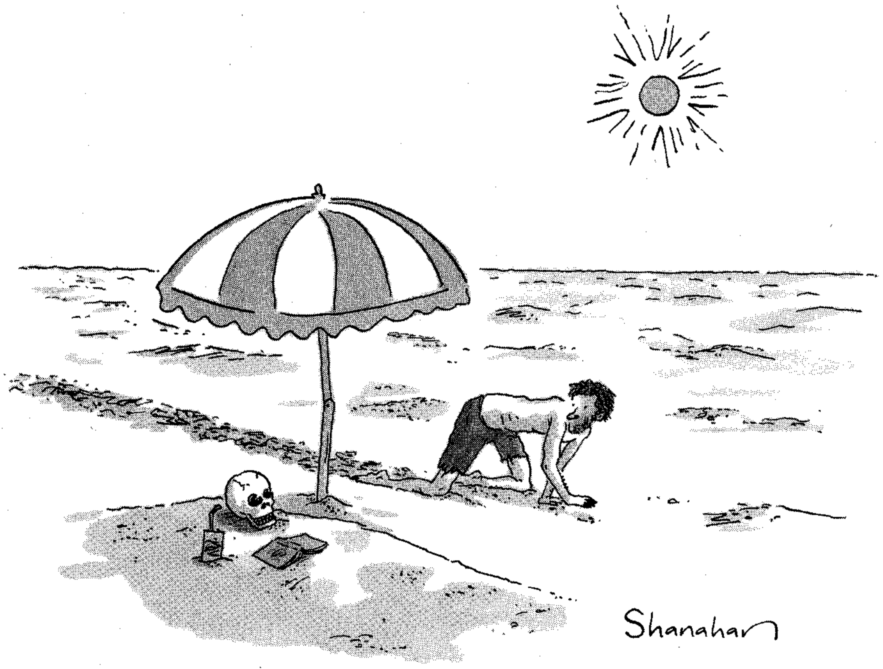


Senator Hillary Clinton, who was next up, spotted a chink in Obama’s armor and went for it:

> Well, I will not promise to meet with the leaders of these countries during my first year. I *will* promise a very vigorous diplomatic effort. Because I think it is not that you promise a meeting at that high a level before you know what the intentions are. . . . I will use a lot of high-level Presidential envoys to test the waters, to feel the way. But certainly we’re not going to just have our President meet with Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez and, you know, the presidents of North Korea, Iran, and Syria until we know better what the way forward would be.

The commentariat, from David Brooks, of the *Times*, to the *Nation’s* David Corn, scored this exchange as a stumble for Obama, a palpable hit for Clinton. Over the next few days, things got huffier. Obama’s remarks were “irresponsible and, frankly, naïve,” Clinton said. Obama, aiming at Clinton’s greatest vulnerability with the Democratic base, shot back, “I think what is irresponsible and naïve is to have authorized a war without asking how we were going to get out.” A day later, he swung a left hook: “I don’t want Bush-Cheney lite.” Clinton’s parry: “This is getting kind of silly. I’ve been called a lot of things in my life, but I’ve never been called George Bush or Dick Cheney. . . . I don’t want to see the power and prestige of the United States President put at risk by rushing into meetings with the likes of Chávez, and Castro, and Ahmadinejad.”

It was left to another Clinton, former President Bill, to try to calm



things down a bit. "I don't want to get in the middle of that whole spat Hillary and Senator Obama had, but there's more than one way to practice diplomacy," he told a gathering of the Democratic Leadership Council. The point, he added, is that they had "a vigorous agreement on the big question, which is 'Should we have more diplomacy?' The answer is yes. Then you can parse their answers to the specific questions and decide who you think is right."

Very well, then, let's parse. Obama didn't commit to meeting with the quintet of villains; he expressed a willingness to do so, which is not the same thing. What he advocated was "send[ing] a signal that we need to talk to Iran and Syria," a signal Clinton has been sending, too. "Without precondition" does not mean without preparation. Nor is it inconsistent with waiting until one has a better idea of the probable outcome. It simply means being ready to sit down and negotiate even if no concessions have been made in advance. On the other hand, although Clinton voted to authorize force against Iraq, it's crystal clear that she would not have gone to war there had she been President. And "Bush-Cheney lite"? Them's fightin' words, and most unfair ones.

In truth, each candidate is exaggerating, even distorting, what the other is saying. Their squabble is mutually advantageous to the extent that it advances their respective (to use the buzzword of the moment) "narratives." Hers: the steady, experienced, disciplined, battle-tested veteran, aggressive and cautious in equal measure. His: the inspiring new face, unfettered by past mistakes and unafraid to defy "the conventional wisdom" and "Washington." She's showing she can deliver a punch; he's showing his jaw's not made of glass. She's pointing to his gaffe (and it was a gaffe, if only because it opened him to attack); he's proving that by holding his ground he can turn a sow's ear into, if not a silk purse, at least a nylon backpack.

Clinton—Bill, that is—is right. Substantively, there's much less disagreement here than meets the eye. The same is true of the subsidiary spats that followed. When Obama, in a speech on terrorism at the Wilson Center in Washington, said, "If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets [in Pakistan] and President Musharraf won't act, we will," he came under attack not only from Hillary Clinton but also from Senators Joseph Biden and Christopher Dodd. It turned out, though, that their objection was not to what he said—which they agree with—but to the undiplomatic indiscretion of saying it out loud. Similarly, when Obama said he would not use nuclear weapons to attack terrorists, Senator Clinton tut-tutted him, saying, "I don't believe that any President should make any blanket statements with respect to the use or non-use of nuclear weapons. But I think we'll leave it at that, because I don't know the circumstances in which he was responding." Yet no one imagines that President Hillary Clinton would order a nuclear attack on a terrorist training camp in the wilds of Waziristan, even if bin Laden himself were in residence.

The circumstances, by the way, were these: A Capitol Hill reporter for the Associated Press, spotting Obama emerging from a breakfast with constituents, asked him a question. He answered, "I think it would be a profound mistake for us to use nuclear weapons in any circumstance"—he paused—"involving civilians." He paused again. "Let me scratch that," he added. "There's been no discussion of nuclear weapons. That's not on the table."

Let me scratch that, indeed. The sentence you are reading has been tweaked a half-dozen times. But in an age of omnipresent microphones, instant transcripts, cell-phone videos, and merciless cable-TV hosts, politicians have no such luxury. When they open their mouths, the first draft is the final. Off the cuff is engraved in granite. Between the two parties there are twenty-nine more debates and forums scheduled, all before the first primary. Start parsing.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

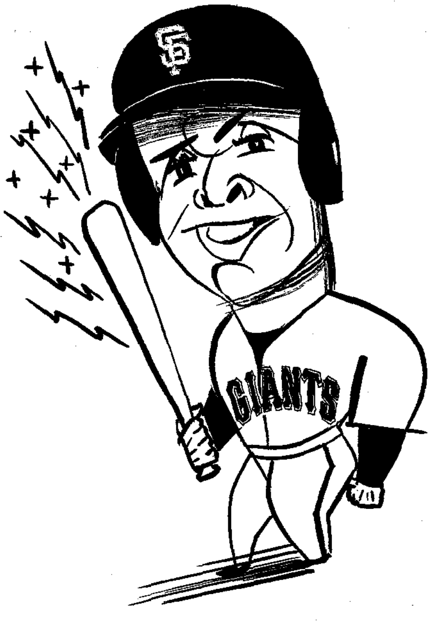
## AT THE PLATE
## DEATHLY NUMBERS

Barry Bonds, the Lord Voldemort of baseball, has prevailed in the end, rapping the enchanted No. 756 and, for the moment, closing a complex tale that has held us too long and (here in Eastern Daylight Time, at least) way too late. The image may not hold up, since it casts baseball commissioner Bud Selig as Harry Potter, but for half a decade now a dank moral haze and a sense of unlikelihood have surrounded the Giant slugger Bonds as he pursued the famous seven-hundred-and-fourteen lifetime home-run mark established by Babe Ruth, and then Hank Dumbledore's all-time seven hundred and fifty-five. An irritated non-reader (or non-fan) who happened in on this story three days earlier and saw Commissioner Selig standing up in his box in San Diego but *not applauding* Bonds as he circled the bases after his tying seven-hundred-and-fifty-fifth poke, against the Padres, would sense at the same moment that footnotes or a movie version would not begin to clear things up. You had to have read the books.

Bonds's record dinger, in the fifth inning of a night game against the Washington Nationals at Petco Park, in San Francisco, came in his third at-bat of the evening, succeeding a loud double and a single. One vacationing Maine-coast cottager with a dinky summertime TV set—this cottager—had recently fallen into the habit of going upstairs to brush his teeth and put on his pajamas after watching Bonds's first at-bat, returning before the second one, and tottering back up to bed when it was over, never mind the rest of the game. This time, the vision of Barry's locked-in, more characteristic swings kept him awake, and brought him back down again minutes before midnight: just in time for the blessed three-and-two solo blast, four hundred and thirty-five feet to right center field, and the clenched fists to heaven; the slow but not too slow base-circling; the extended-family hugs (including one with Willie Mays, who is Bonds's godfather); a careful but placating prerecorded concession by the saintly and now deposed Hank Aaron, delivered on the JumboTron ("I move over now and offer my best wishes to Barry and his family on this historical achievement"); and locally—on the stairs once again, with the set turned off at last—a "Yesss!" in the dark.

The rejoicing here is not just over an expected natural decline in the booings and editorializings about Bonds's inferred but unproved use of steroids during the 2000 to 2003 seasons, late in his career (he is forty-three), when his customary thirty-seven or thirty-eight homers per season jumped into the upper forties and, in 2001, produced the all-time single-season record of seventy-three. Another hope is for less piety, a shift in the altogether mystifying popular notion that the lifetime home-run mark is somehow sacrosanct—"baseball's most hallowed record," as the news reports called it the other day. Hallowed but hollow, perhaps, since home-run totals are determined not just by the batters but by different pitchers, in very different eras, and, most of all, by the outer dimensions of the major-league parks, which have always varied widely and have been deliberately reconfigured in the sixteen ballparks built since 1992, thus satisfying the owners' financial interest in more and still more home runs. Bonds has been called a cheater, but the word should hardly come up in a sport whose proprietors, if they were in charge of the classic Olympic hundred-metre dash, would stage it variously at a hundred and six metres, ninety-four, a hundred and three, and so forth, and engrave the resulting times on a tablet.

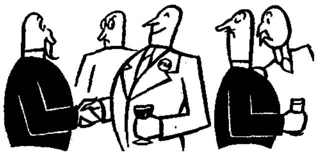
The weight of records and their breaking could be seen in Barry Bonds's vapid swings and feeble pop-ups and dribblers during the six homerless games he endured before tying Aaron's mark. By coincidence, the same frailty overtook Alex Rodriguez, the Yankees' celebrity thumper and third baseman, who is leading all comers in home runs this year but fell into a career-worst, oh-for-twenty-two stretch at the plate while he attempted to deliver the round-tripper that would put him into the élite five-hundred lifetime home-run club, with every pitch to him now weirdly illuminated by the glisten and flare of thousands of digital cameras. The same strain, for that matter, lay within the preoccupied, baggy-eyed stares of Tom Glavine, the slim elder lefty of the Mets, as he went for his splendid three-hundredth lifetime victory. The reprieves almost overlapped—A-Rod's first-inning homer against the Royals arriving on Saturday afternoon, and Glavine's win the next night, against the Cubs—and two days later Barry set us free. He is not much liked—"churl" and "churlish" have had a wide revival in the media lexicon when he is under discussion—but his smile after the homer and the hoopla was benign. This was Opening Day.



*Barry Bonds*

—*Roger Angell*

## LEGACIES
## THE SHRUM CURSE



Robert Shrum, who was for three decades among the most prominent Democratic political consultants in the country, never mastered the exigencies of everyday life. He grew up in Los Angeles but does not drive; he is best known as a speechwriter but does not type. Since 2000, he has spent his summers at a house on Cape Cod, but his complexion seldom appears other than pasty or sunburned. Over the years, Shrum effectively turned himself into a machine for campaigning, and then, suddenly, after the 2004 election, he turned the machine off. "I thought it was time to move on," Shrum said the other day over lunch downtown. "I'd been doing it long enough."

There was also, of course, the matter of the "Shrum curse." In his last contest, Shrum served as the chief strategist for John Kerry, the eighth time he had worked for a Democratic Presidential candidate and his eighth loser. In lieu of a candidate, Shrum has this summer produced a memoir, "No Excuses: Concessions of a Serial Campaigner," a dishy recounting of his career. Page for page, notwithstanding the title, the book probably has more excuses than concessions, and there are revealing, and often unflattering, glimpses of his former clients: a foulmouthed Edmund Muskie, a dithering Bob Kerrey, and a lightweight John Edwards, among others. In all, though, Shrum, who is sixty-four years old, takes on the subject of the curse without actually acknowledging its existence.

"At a personal level, I don't believe in the 'Shrum curse,' " he said. "I had some influence and importance and a great vantage point, but the elections are always about the candidates, not the consultants." Still, confronting his first Presidential election in more than a generation as merely an interested outsider, Shrum shows that he has retained more than a few tics of the political trade. There is, for example, the criticism masquerading as praise, as when he says, "I happen to like Hillary Clinton." Shrum has had an uneasy relationship with the Clintons dating back to the McGovern campaign in 1972, on which both the future President and the consultant worked. "Bill is now the rock star of the Democratic Party, but he didn't get to be a great President," Shrum said. "He was reëlected without asking for a mandate to do anything big, and he didn't get anything big done as President." Notably, Clinton was elected and reëlected without any help from Shrum.

Shrum's ambivalence toward the former President extends to his wife. "Hillary wanted to lock up the race early, and she hasn't done it," he said. "Her lead in the national polls is irrelevant. It's all about what happens in the early primary states. She's redefining change as nostalgia. Her campaign is about building a bridge to the past, not the future, as her husband used to say."

Shrum made his reputation as Senator Edward Kennedy's speechwriter, most famously of his speech at the 1980 Democratic Convention. ("The hope still lives, and the dream shall never die.") Like many in his generation, Shrum pines for a Kennedy-like figure, and he believes that he may be seeing one in Barack Obama. "During the last couple of weeks, Obama's been very interesting," Shrum said, referring to the senator's willingness to meet with foreign dictators and his tough talk about attacking Al Qaeda in Pakistan. "His maverick statements on foreign policy have been like what J.F.K. was saying in the late nineteen-fifties, and the reaction was the same: 'He doesn't know what he's talking about, he's naïve,' etc. But maybe he's just thinking ahead of everyone else."

This time, Shrum won't even watch the campaign unfold from Washington, where he and his wife, Marylouise Oates, were fixtures on the social circuit. They now split their time between the Cape and an apartment in the Village, where Shrum teaches policy analysis at New York University. (Washington's booming real-estate market helped ease their semi-retirement. They sold their house there to the Swiss government, moved to another, then sold that one to John Negroponte, who is now the Deputy Secretary of State.) Shrum had an outstanding record in statewide elections, winning thirty Senate races and ten governorships for the Democrats, but he realizes, with some melancholy, that the Presidential curse is likely to be his legacy. "To the extent I feel bad, it's about what it's meant for the country, not for me," he said. "Al Gore should have been President on 9/11. If John Kerry had won, we'd be out of Iraq by now. These things matter a lot more than I do. I just wish I'd bent history a few more inches."

—*Jeffrey Toobin*

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## THE MUSICAL LIFE
### FINE POINTS

Devotees of "Antiques Roadshow," which, if nothing else, has exposed the financial folly of refinishing old furniture, know that a backstory adds value to any old thing: "Because it's a matter of public record that your grandfather did time in the Hannibal jail for stealing this hutch from a barber who once trimmed Samuel Clemens's mustache, it's worth a lot more." *Brrrrinng!* So one wonders what the 1980 Martin M-42 custom guitar in the display case at Matt Umanov's vintage-guitar store, on Bleecker Street, would fetch if it didn't have a knife gash in it from a bar fight in Mexico, and if the scary-looking metal folding knife that allegedly caused the gash didn't come with it. Guitarists believe some guitars have a strong mojo. "In this case, we're offering the mojo itself with the instrument," Danny Reisbick, the store manager, said the other day. The asking price for the wounded guitar, with knife: $6,995. Umanov recently sold a steel resonator guitar that is accompanied by a gentler but no less colorful mojo item: a mud-dauber wasp's nest inside its body. Price with the nest: *Brrrrinng!* $3,495.

So much to know! The visit of Jerry Douglas, the Dobro player for Alison Krauss and Union Station, to the Umanov store a couple of weeks ago—the day of the group's appearance at the Beacon Theatre—proved to be an impressive reminder of how refined fine points can be. Douglas, who was looking for a Keeley overdrive pedal, noticed almost immediately that the store had, besides the lacerated Martin and the mud-dauber resonator, two guitars made from koa wood, which comes from Hawaii. He saw them from afar. Hawaiian-style guitars are slide guitars, played on the lap, like Dobros.

"Oh, that one was made from a tree on the west side of the island, and the other one was made from a tree on the east side," Douglas, a stately man of some fifty years with brown, thatchy hair, said. "You see how the grain on that one, from the east, is pretty straight—lots of rainfall there. But the grain on that one is more twisty and gnarled, so it's from the west side, where there's much less moisture." He picked up one of the guitars, asked for a metal slide from a display case, sat down on a stool, laid the instrument on his lap as if it were a baby, and sent forth a volley of bluesy notes. Then he played a bit that recalled Don Ho, the Hawaiian musician responsible for the vogue for the Hawaiian-guitar warble some decades ago.

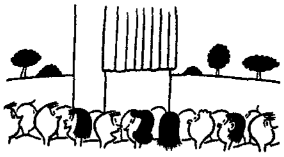
Douglas then turned his attention to a brand-new National resonator—a metal guitar patterned on older models favored by blues musicians. "Can you believe this?" he said, pointing at the factory-generated dings in the metal, like pre-washed and pre-torn bluejeans. He turned the guitar over and said, with some merriment, "Look, they've even simulated belt-buckle marks back here."

As Douglas walked out of the store, he spied a box of assorted picks on the counter and went through their taxonomy, too. He singled out a thumbpick, which in his hand immediately became remarkable for its elegance and sturdiness. He said, "This is a Golden Gate pick. I can go through one of these in just two sets, because I use my thumb so much. I taught myself the Dobro and my techniques are really weird; I use my thumb to dig out notes more than anyone else. After two sets, this would start to bend."

Later that night, at the Beacon, Douglas had his customary solo session, at the start of which he commented on the dark side of noticing exquisite detail. "We've been on the road together for quite a while now," he told the audience, and added, gesturing toward one of his bandmates, "and the way that guy chews is driving me crazy." He proceeded to play three of his own songs, and you could listen to them just on their surfaces, of course, and be appropriately dazzled. But you could also consider for a moment the backstory—the body of knowledge that gave those notes such expressiveness. Yeats called it "the fascination of what's difficult."

—*Daniel Menaker*

## EARLY BIRDS
## TWEEN DREAM



At 6 A.M. one recent Thursday, a barista at a Times Square Starbucks was puzzled to see dozens of teen-age girls streaming past the window, many of them carrying homemade signs. They had come, a customer explained, to see the cast of "High School Musical" perform on "Good Morning America." The blue-eyed boy whose face was pasted on the placards was the film's nineteen-year-old star, Zac Efron. "He's been in what, one movie?" said the Starbucks guy. "People fall in love quickly around here."

As anyone who has been within shrieking distance of a sixth grader during the past year knows, "High School Musical" is more than a movie. It's a crucial way station on the developmental road between "Powerpuff Girls" and "Mean Girls." The original Disney Channel film, about a basketball player (Efron) and a math nerd (Vanessa Hudgens) who defy the social contract and audition for the school musical, has spawned a concert tour, the best-selling album of 2006, an untold number of Facebook tribute pages, and a sequel, which premières this week.

Outside the "G.M.A." studio, two lines snaked around the block: one for ticket holders, one for standbys. About seventy people into the standby line was a group of sixteen-year-old girls from Ramsey, New Jersey, each holding a sign: Sam Campbell ("WE LOVE YOU ZAC"), Katherine Wilson ("WE LOVE YOU CORBIN"), Megan Naude ("ZAC ATTACK"), Regina Guinto ("PLS HUG ME IT'S MY BIRTHDAY!"), and Lauren McCarthy ("HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL ITS LIKE A RAINBOW IN MY EYES SO NICE I LIKE IT"). "We had, like, seven cups of coffee, and Red Bull," Katherine, who was wearing a tank top and plaid shorts and was shaking uncontrollably, said. "We stayed up all night. I'm not lying. None of us slept."

"We took a limo," Lauren said.

"For her birthday," Katherine said, jerking her head toward Regina. "We didn't sleep all night. Did I say that?"

Katherine explained that her dream encounter with the cast would be at Taco Bell. ("With all my friends there. I'd buy them all tacos.") Nonetheless, Regina, whose mother had dropped the girls off in Times Square at 4 A.M., was acknowledged by the others to be the biggest Zac Efron fan.

"He grew up in California. He has a younger brother named Dylan. He's a Libra. He's dating Vanessa Hudgens. He's in 'Hairspray.' His first big thing was 'Summerland.' He had a gap in his teeth, but he got that fixed. He went to Hawaii with Vanessa. That's common knowledge. We saw him at the 'Today' show two weeks ago, but I didn't get his autograph. His hair is amazing," Regina said.

Farther down the line were seventeen girls wearing white tuxedos. "We're a dance group," one of them said. "We competed yesterday at the Marriott Marquis, at Dance Masters of America's national competition, and we received a platinum and we're coming here to try to get on TV." They began to tap-dance.

"We all love 'High School Musical,'" another dancer said.

The first dancer corrected her: "We'd actually rather get on TV."

They were interrupted by a scream. It was Katherine, Regina, and Lauren, who had run to the front of the line to catch a glimpse of the cast in rehearsal.

"We saw them in the studio!" said Katherine, her bracelets clacking as her arms continued to shake.

"But the police ushered us out."

"I couldn't breathe."

"I know."

"And the people who have tickets were laughing at us."

"Really?"

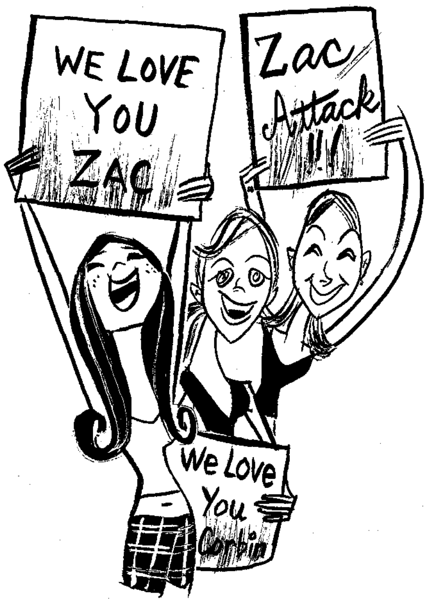
"Yeah."

The three of them huddled. Was it worth it to sneak back, even if they might get stopped by the police again?

"Carpe diem."

"Carpe diem. Come on."

The ticketed audience had filed into the studio, and kids at the front of the standby line were allowed to crowd into the area outside the studio windows. The girls from New Jersey made it through; the dancers did not. The line was cut off in front of a group of girls wearing yellow T-shirts that they had spray-painted the night before.



"Assemble!" Reena Aquino, their leader, said. The gang lined up so that their shirts read, "HSM2!"

The segment was about to tape. A man wearing a headset suggested to the remaining standbys that they go across the street and watch on the JumboTron. Reena and her friends walked over to a traffic island, on Broadway, and took up positions next to the tuxedoed girls, who were doing their tap routine.

"We're like a big yellow blob, so they'll see us from in there," Reena's friend Nicole said. They looked up at the JumboTron, on which Diane Sawyer could be seen shuffling papers.

"What's her name?" Reena said. "I don't watch this show."

Nicole shrugged. "Katie Couric?"

—*Michael Schulman*

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## OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

# THE DARK SIDE

*Making war on light pollution.*

BY DAVID OWEN

In 1610, Galileo Galilei published a small book describing astronomical observations that he had made of the skies above Padua. His homemade telescopes had less magnifying and resolving power than most beginners' telescopes sold today, yet with them he made astonishing discoveries: that the moon has mountains and other topographical features; that Jupiter is orbited by satellites, which he called planets; and that the Milky Way is made up of individual stars. It may seem strange that this last observation could have surprised anyone, but in Galileo's time people assumed that the Milky Way must be some kind of continuous substance. It truly resembled a streak of spilled liquid—our word "galaxy" comes from the Greek for milk—and it was so bright that it cast shadows on the ground (as did Jupiter and Venus). Today, by contrast, most Americans are unable to see the Milky Way in the sky above the place where they live, and those who can see it are sometimes baffled by its name.

The stars have not become dimmer; rather, the Earth has become vastly brighter, so that celestial objects are harder to see. Air pollution has made the atmosphere less transparent and more reflective, and high levels of terrestrial illumination have washed out the stars overhead—a phenomenon called "sky glow." Anyone who has flown across the country on a clear night has seen the landscape ablaze with artificial lights, especially in urban areas. Today, a person standing on the observation deck of the Empire State Building on a cloudless night would be unable to discern much more than the moon, the brighter planets, and a handful of very bright stars—less than one per cent of what Galileo would have been able to see without a telescope. Amateur astronomers sometimes classify nighttime darkness on the Bortle Dark-Sky Scale, which is based on a number of criteria, among them "limiting magnitude," or the brightness of the faintest celestial objects that are visible without magnification. The scale, composed of nine points, was devised in 2001 by John E. Bortle, a retired Westchester County fire chief and a monthly columnist for *Sky & Telescope*. "One of the problems I was addressing was that younger amateur astronomers, especially east of the Mississippi, had never seen a dark sky at all," he told me recently. "People will sometimes come up from the city and call me and say, 'John, I've found this fabulous dark site, it's totally black, you can't imagine how good it is.' So I'll go and have a look, but it's always poor. They have no comparison to work against."

In Galileo's time, nighttime skies all over the world would have merited the darkest Bortle ranking, Class 1. Today, the sky above New York City is Class 9, at the other extreme of the scale, and American suburban skies are typically Class 5, 6, or 7. The very darkest places in the continental United States today are almost never darker than Class 2, and are increasingly threatened. For someone standing on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon on a moonless night, the brightest feature of the sky is not the Milky Way but the glow of Las Vegas, a hundred and seventy-five miles away. To see skies truly comparable to those which Galileo knew, you would have to travel to such places as the Australian outback and the mountains of Peru. And civilization's assault on the stars has consequences far beyond its impact on astronomers. Excessive, poorly designed outdoor lighting wastes electricity, imperils human health and safety, disturbs natural habitats, and, increasingly, deprives many of us of a direct relationship with the nighttime sky, which throughout human history has been a powerful source of reflection, inspiration, discovery, and plain old jaw-dropping wonder.

David L. Crawford earned his Ph.D. in astronomy in 1958 and spent nearly all his professional life at Kitt Peak National Observatory, on a mountaintop fifty-six miles southwest of Tucson, Arizona. By 1970, he had noticed, with alarm, a significant decrease in astronomical visibility. Tucson was growing rapidly, and so was its sky glow. With a colleague, he persuaded the city to adopt an ordinance governing exterior lighting, and later they persuaded other Arizona cities and counties to pass similar regulations. In 1988, Crawford and another friend formed a nonprofit organization called the International Dark-Sky Association. "We're sort of a nighttime Sierra Club," he told me, during a recent visit to Tucson. He retired from Kitt Peak in 1995 and has worked full time for the I.D.A. ever since, often putting in sixty-hour workweeks. He has the complexion of a man who doesn't spend a lot of time outdoors during daylight, and speaks in the modulated tones of someone accustomed to talking while others are asleep. "We're on a mission to change the world at night," he said.

The I.D.A.'s headquarters is a warren of small offices, accommodating a dozen or so staff members and a shifting group of volunteers and researchers, around the corner from a (non-related) store that sells light fixtures. Crawford and his staff devote much of their time to proselytizing for dark-sky regulations and working with manufacturers to improve lighting products. Hanging on a wall in a conference room is a map that shows the geographical distribution of the organization's eleven thousand members. The states with the highest representation are California (fifteen hundred and thirty), Arizona (six hundred and seventy), New York (five hundred and one), and Massachusetts (four hundred and eighty-two). The I.D.A. also has members in seventy-eight foreign countries, including Iraq and Iran, where astronomy is a popular hobby, especially among girls and young women. Authorities in Sa'adat-shahr, about four hundred miles south of Tehran, periodically cut off all electric power in the town in order to improve visibility at nighttime "star parties" conducted by a local teacher.

When the I.D.A. began, Crawford's interest in outdoor lighting was limited to its impact on observatories; today, the organization's brief covers everything from advising law-enforcement officers to assessing the effects of artificial lighting on wildlife. On the evening of my visit, while Crawford and I waited for the sky to grow darker, we went to dinner at a relatively new shopping mall on Tucson's outskirts. As we drove up, Crawford explained that the mall had been of particular interest to the I.D.A.: "The original lighting system for this mall was put in by somebody from out of town, and it didn't meet the Tucson code, so the developer had to call in a consultant and change it all. Now it's one of the best in town, and we actually gave them an award a few years ago."

The mall's large parking lot was fully illuminated—as we walked from the car to the restaurant, I had no trouble reading notes that I had scribbled in my notebook—but it was free of what dark-

*A time-exposure photograph of the Milky Way over the New Mexico desert. The word "galaxy" comes from the Greek for milk.*

CHRIS COOK/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

*"I'd consider taking out this appendix you're not using and greatly expanding your kidney area."*

• •

sky advocates call "glare bombs": fixtures that cast much of their light sideways, into the eyes of passersby, or upward, into the sky. Tucson's code limits the brightness of exterior fixtures and requires most of them to be of a type usually known as "full cutoff" or "fully shielded," meaning that they cast no light above the horizontal plane and employ a light source that cannot be seen by someone standing to the side. These are not necessarily more difficult or expensive to manufacture than traditional lights, and they typically cost less to operate. Calgary, Alberta, recently cut its electricity expenditures by more than two million dollars a year, by switching to full-cutoff, reduced-wattage street lights.

Diminishing the level of nighttime lighting can actually increase visibility. In recent years, the California Department of Transportation has greatly reduced its use of continuous lighting on its highways, and has increased its use of reflectors and other passive guides, which concentrate luminance where drivers need it rather than dispersing it over broad areas. (Passive guides also save money, since they don't require electricity.) F.A.A.-regulated airport runways, though they don't use reflectors, are lit in a somewhat similar fashion, with rows of guidance lights rather than with high-powered floodlights covering broad expanses of macadam. This makes the runways easier for pilots to pick out at night, because the key to visibility, on runways as well as on roads, is contrast.

After dinner, Crawford showed me his home, in a subdivision of small, closely spaced, desert-colored stucco town houses. Tucson gives individual neighborhoods the right to choose whether they want street lights (and to pay for them if they do). Most of the newer, more affluent residential areas, and a number of commercial blocks, have elected to do without. Crawford's subdivision, to his annoyance, does have street lights, and the fixtures, though technically shielded, have frosted-glass side panels, which diffuse the light in a way that turns them into glare bombs. Crawford pointed out a cluster of mailboxes across the street from his garage. The lighting near the mailboxes was of a type that Crawford calls "criminal-friendly": it was almost painful to look at, and it turned the walkway behind the boxes into an impenetrable void. "The eye adapts to the brightest thing in sight," he said. "When you have glare, the eye adapts to the glare, but then you can't see anything darker." The human retina contains two kinds of photoreceptors—cones, which react quickly to fine details and colors, and rods, which, though slower and bad at colors, are far more numerous and many times more sensitive to light. It's mainly the rods that enable us to see at night, and they are so sensitive that they can take up to an hour to recover their full function after exposure to a light source no brighter than a desk lamp. Deer, which have an even higher proportion of rods to cones, have excellent nighttime vision but appear extremely vulnerable to temporary blinding by bright light—perhaps a reason that they have difficulty in getting out of the way of cars on dark roads. People may experience a similar phenomenon driving away from a highly illuminated outdoor area, such as a gas station with an intensely bright canopy.

Much so-called security lighting is designed with little thought for how eyes—or criminals—operate. Marcus Felson, a professor at the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, has concluded that lighting is effective in preventing crime mainly if it enables people to notice criminal activity as it's taking place, and if it doesn't help criminals to see what they're doing. Bright, unshielded floodlights—one of the most common types of outdoor security lighting in the country—often fail on both counts, as do all-night lights installed on isolated structures or on parts of buildings that can't be observed by passersby (such as back doors). A burglar who is forced to use a flashlight, or whose movement triggers a security light controlled by an infrared motion sensor, is much more likely to be spotted than one whose presence is masked by the blinding glare of a poorly placed metal halide "wall pack." In the early seventies, the public-school system in San Antonio, Texas, began leaving many of its school buildings, parking lots, and other property dark at night and found that the no-lights policy not only reduced energy costs but also dramatically cut vandalism.

Most people don't notice bad nighttime lighting; if you do, it can make you slightly crazed. When I'm driving at night, my wife has to tell me to watch the road instead of looking back over my shoulder at a yard whose trees have floodlights in their branches, or at an empty parking lot so bright that you could deliver babies in it. The Connecticut town where I live was incorporated in 1779. Many residents are protective of the village green, and become agitated if anyone suggests doing something to it that they consider unhistorical, such as painting a house a color other than white. Yet the green's focal point, the two-hundred-plus-year-old First Congregational Church, is lit up at night like a convenience store, and with two jarringly different types of illumination: the broad portico is lit with warm incandescent lamps, while the steeple and the clock tower are bathed in the icy glare of six mercury-vapor spotlights. A friend lives across from the church, and the lights give her living room a cold glow, as though someone had forgotten to close the door of a refrigerator. Obviously, Americans two centuries ago didn't point spotlights at their buildings (and therefore enjoyed the extinct pleasure of seeing those buildings by moonlight and starlight), yet I would bet that most of my town's residents, if they think about it at all, consider lighting up an old New England church not an offensive anachronism but almost a matter of civic duty.

I'm the chairman of my town's zoning commission, and we recently adopted our first regulations governing residential outdoor lighting. The rules prohibit unshielded exterior lamps and limit the lighting of trees and other vegetation, but, like all our regulations, they apply only to installations made after the date of the change, and they will be difficult to enforce. It doesn't help that the town itself is a conspicuous offender. A walkway near the town hall is lit by pole-mounted "Colonial" lanterns of a familiar type, with unshielded lamps and poles a bit less than six feet tall, so that most of the light is projected into the eyes of pedestrians. When the lamps are turned on, the base of each fixture casts a dense black shadow, about sixteen feet in diameter, onto the grass and pavement directly below it, as though the purpose of the lamp were to shed darkness rather than light. Some residents have objected that the new lighting regulations unnecessarily limit the freedom of individuals to do as they like on their own property. But photons don't stop at lot lines. (If someone installed a basic Home Depot wall pack on the moon and aimed it at the Earth, you'd be able to see the light, when it wasn't itself in direct sunlight, with a moderately powerful hobbyist's telescope.) People who decide to illuminate their trees at night, or to install unshielded floodlights on the corners of their garage, shining into a bedroom in a house next door, are making a decision for their neighbors as well as for themselves.

My friend Ken Daniel is a lighting designer. About a decade ago, he told me something that changed the way I think about the night. It was early evening, and we were sitting with some other people in an unelectrified barn on Martha's Vineyard and looking out at the ocean, and he observed that we were doing something that Americans almost never do anymore: watching it get dark. In the early nineteen-nineties, Daniel worked in Los Angeles and he and his family lived in Glendale. His wife, Gina, told me that the street lights and other lights in their neighborhood were so bright that their bedrooms never got fully dark at night, even though they had curtains. When the Northridge earthquake struck, in 1994, the first thing she noticed, after the shaking had awakened her, was that she couldn't see. "The earthquake had knocked out the power all over the city, and everything was black," she said. "When we got the kids and ran outside, we found all our neighbors standing in the street, looking up at the sky and saying, 'Wow.' "

Growing numbers of us pass most of our waking hours "in a box, looking at a box," as Dave Crawford put it: we spend our days inside offices, looking at computer screens, and our evenings inside houses, looking at television screens. Fewer and fewer of us spend much time outside at all, except in automobiles—and when we do venture outdoors after dark we are usually just stepping into yet another box, the glowing canopy that our lights have projected into the sky.

The twenty-four-hour day/night cycle, which is also known as the circadian clock, influences physiological processes in virtually all living things. Pervasive artificial illumination has existed for such a brief period that not even the species that invented it has had time to adapt, biologically or otherwise. The most widely discussed human malady related to the disturbance of circadian rhythms is jet lag, but there are others. Richard Stevens, a cancer epidemiologist at the University of Connecticut Health Center, in Farmington, has suggested a link between cancer and the "circadian disruption" of hormones caused by artificial lighting. Early in his career, Stevens was one of many researchers struck by the markedly high incidence of breast cancer among women in the industrialized world, in comparison with those in developing countries, and he at first supported the most common early hypothesis, which was that the cause must be dietary. Yet repeated studies found no clear link to food. In the early eighties, Stevens told me recently, "I literally woke up in the middle of the night—there was a street lamp outside the window, and it was so bright that I could almost read in my bedroom—and I thought, Could it be that?" A few years later, he persuaded the authors of the Nurses' Health Study, one of the largest and most rigorous investigations of women's medical issues ever undertaken, to add questions about nighttime employment, and the study subsequently revealed a strong association between working the night shift and an increased risk of breast cancer. Eva Schernhammer, of the Harvard Medical School, and Karl Schulmeister, an Austrian physicist, analyzed the work-shift data from the Nurses' Study several years ago, and wrote, "We hypothesize that the potential primary culprit for this observed association is the lack of melatonin, a cancer-protective agent whose production is severely diminished in people exposed to light at night."

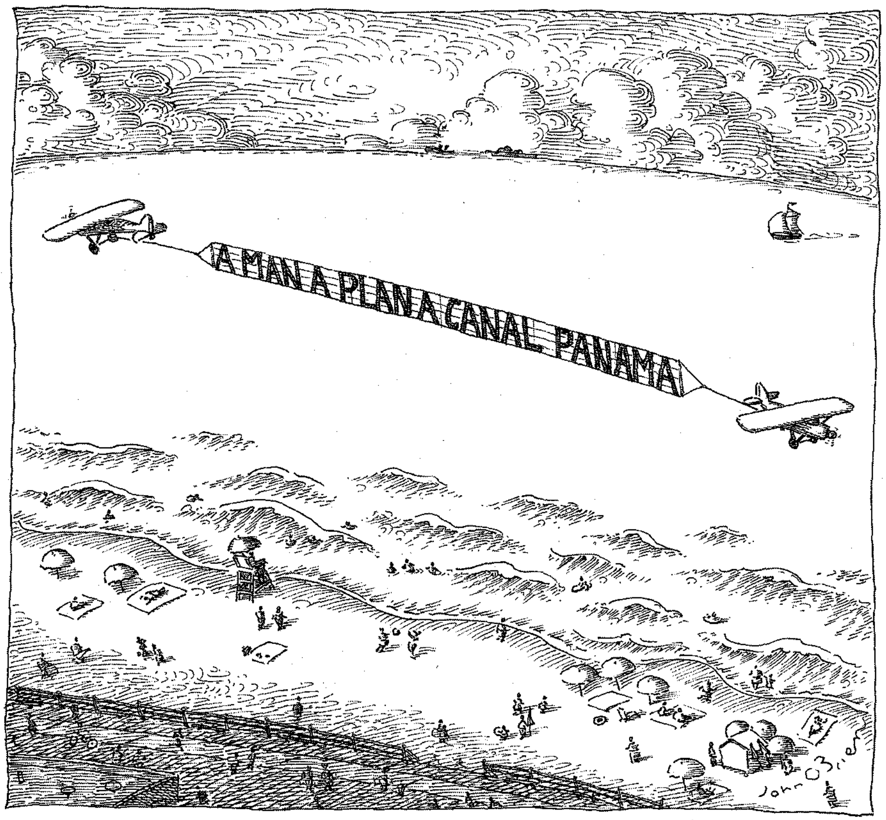
Although nighttime lighting has seldom been a priority of environmentalists—one of whom described it to me recently as a "soft" issue—bad or unnecessary lighting not only wastes billions of dollars' worth of energy every year but also can wreak havoc on ecosystems. Migrating birds can be fatally "captured" by artificial lights, a fact that was made obvious a half century ago, when early versions of a common meteorological device called a ceilometer—which used a powerful vertical beam of light to measure cloud ceilings—sometimes killed thousands of migrating birds in a single night. Artificial light can be especially lethal to insects. Gerhard Eisenbeis, a German entomologist, has written that outdoor lighting can have a "vacuum cleaner" effect on local insect populations, causing large numbers to be "sucked out of habitat." An earlier German study showed that new, brightly lit gas stations initially attracted large numbers of insects, but that the numbers fell rapidly after two years, presumably because local populations were decimated. One of the several ways in which light fixtures kill insects is by causing them to rest on the ground or in vegetation, where they become easy prey. In Florida, artificial lights have had a disastrous impact on sea-turtle populations. During the summer and the early fall, hatchlings, which emerge primarily at night from nests on Florida beaches, are often fatally attracted to street lights, house lights, and other sources of unshielded artificial illumination, dying after being drawn into open areas, where they are easily attacked by predators, or onto roads. The problem is that newborn sea turtles instinctively move toward the brightest part of the horizon—which, for millions of years, would have been not shopping malls and beach houses but the night sky over the open sea.

The day after Dave Crawford and I inspected nighttime Tucson, I drove five hundred and fifty miles north to Bryce Canyon National Park, in southern Utah. That evening, I joined about two hundred people, including many children, outside the visitors' center, where telescopes of various sizes had been set up in the parking lot. Several were equipped with computerized tracking devices, which could be programmed to find and follow interesting objects in the sky. At one station or another, I saw the four Galilean satellites of Jupiter (tiny dots in a line), Saturn (with rings), a dense group of old stars, known as a globular cluster, a pair of twin stars (one blue and one gold), and the mountains and valleys that Galileo saw on the moon. With just my own eyes, I saw the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope, which rapidly crossed the sky just before eleven o'clock, and, a little later, I saw the meteor-like flash of a passing Iridium satellite.

I spoke with Chad Moore, the program director of the National Park Service's Night Sky Team. "Many people who come to our programs have never really looked at the night sky," he told me. "A woman once came up to me and said, 'The moon was out during the day this morning—is that O.K.?' " Moore, who is in his mid-thirties, created the Night Sky Team in 1999. Its mission, he said, is not just to increase interest in stars but also to remind people, including higher-ups in the Park Service, that national parks don't go away when the sun sets.

Moore and I met back in the same parking lot about three hours later, long after the other stargazers had gone to bed. The moon was going to set at about three-forty-five, and at that point there would be an hour of deep darkness before sunrise. We drove to another parking lot, near the rim of the canyon, and walked up to Sunset Point, one of a series of lookouts linked by a walking path. Moore said that he and his fellow-rangers usually have to urge first-time participants in the park's nighttime programs to resist turning on flashlights the moment they step out of their cars, and to instead allow their eyes to become accustomed to the darkness. "When the moon is low in the sky like this, there's about two-thousandths of a foot-candle of light on the ground," he said, referring to a measure of illumination. (Full sunlight on a clear day has an intensity of about ten thousand foot-candles; nighttime city streets are typically lit to about one and a half foot-candles, seven hundred and fifty times brighter than the moonlit path.) "You and I don't have supernatural vision," he continued, "but we're able to see the path just fine, because our eyes evolved to see in these conditions. I can see individual pebbles on the ground, and if I dropped a quarter I could find it."

We walked north along the rim trail, on which the setting moon cast long shadows. The canyon's edge was just a few feet to our right, but I could easily tell where the path ended and the abyss began. The canyon itself was transformed. In bright sunlight, Bryce's orange-and-white limestone hoodoos, which look a little like enormous drip castles, are so vibrant that they almost shimmer; by night, the formations are virtually monochromatic, like mountains at the bottom of the sea. Nightfall inverts the park: the cliffs draw inward,


A MAN A PLAN A CANAL PANAMA

and the sky becomes almost topographical, a canyon turned upside down.

At last, the moon disappeared below the horizon. I could see, at various compass points, little bulges of sky glow projected by a couple of nearby towns, by one or two more distant cities, and by Ruby's, the famous, light-encrusted Bryce-area motel and campground, a few miles away, but the sky directly above us was very dark and was filled with stars. I had no trouble seeing the Milky Way, a broad, densely speckled stripe extending across the sky. Moore pointed out the Great Rift, a cluster of dark patches caused by clouds of light-blocking interstellar dust, and the constellation Sagittarius, toward the luminous center of our galaxy. I lay on my back on a bench and watched for meteors, which streaked past every few minutes: in a truly dark sky, shooting stars are too numerous to bother wishing on. We stayed until we noticed the first glow of the approaching sunrise. Stars near the eastern horizon melted away ahead of it, as though the darkness itself were dissolving.

The next afternoon, Moore and I drove across southern Utah to Natural Bridges National Monument, in the southeastern corner of the state, two hundred and seventy-five miles away. This past March, the I.D.A., relying partly on darkness measurements collected by Moore and his team, selected Natural Bridges as its first International Dark-Sky Park. (Additional sites will be chosen within the next year.) At the time of the designation, Christian Luginbuhl, an astronomer at the U.S. Naval Observatory station in Flagstaff, Arizona, and a longtime dark-sky advocate, said, "In plain English, that means it's the darkest or starriest sky they've seen while doing these reviews."

We arrived at the park just as the summer sky was beginning to deepen, and toured the facilities with Corky Hays, the park's superintendent. Hays came to Natural Bridges in 2004 partly because her previous Park Service posting, Death Valley, had begun to feel too cosmopolitan to her. "Our buildings were pretty dark already," she said, "but Chad and his team have helped us make them even darker, by upgrading a lot of our outdoor lighting. That's let us cut our energy use and operational costs, too, which is important, because the entire park is solar-powered." Moore pointed out several newly installed full-cutoff light fixtures, and found a few older lights, which still needed to be replaced. He asked for the removal of two of the four tubes in a fluorescent ceiling fixture near some public rest rooms, which are kept open all night and are used by after-dark visitors to the park. "The darker the area, the less light you need," he said. "People coming here at night will be dark-adapted, so having more light would actually make it harder for them to see when they leave."

A couple of hours later, after the sun had set completely, Moore and I headed for Owachomo, one of the park's three natural bridges—which were created, thousands of years ago, by fast-flowing streams that undercut the sandstone walls of their canyons. Owachomo, at its midpoint, rises more than a hundred feet above the canyon floor and is almost two hundred feet across. As we turned a corner on the path, it suddenly loomed before us, a startling black void against a field of stars, like a long, ragged strip torn from the sky. After checking the ground for rattlesnakes (we had encountered one already), Moore and I leaned against some big rocks and simply looked. If I stood still, I could see stars apparently blink off, as the earth's rotation caused them to be occluded by the sandstone bridge, while, on the other side, others seemed to blink on. The park is so remote that there is little artificial noise, especially at night, and the silence deepened the darkness. Thinking about the incomprehensible distances above us made me remember nights forty years before, when I was twelve years old and lying on my back in a mountain meadow at summer camp in Colorado, watching for shooting stars in what was probably the darkest sky I've ever seen, or will ever see.

Moore and I stood like that, not saying much, for more than an hour. Then we returned to the visitors' center and said goodbye. I drove east to the nearest town, where I hoped to get some sleep before continuing to Salt Lake City and my flight home. Moore, who had brought a sleeping bag, went out into the park to spend the night under the stars. ♦

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# MY NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

BY PAUL SIMMS

They say that your whole life flashes before your eyes when you're about to die, and I'm here to tell you that it's true. A few months ago, I fell off a thousand-plus-foot-high sheer granite face that had earned a 5.14d rating on the Yosemite Decimal System index—meaning that it is one of the most difficult climbs known to man. Whether this classification is accurate or not I have no idea, as my fall happened when I was just going for a really long walk. All I remember is wondering when the hiking trail I was on would start to feature a less strenuous, "downhill" grade. I was still puzzling over this during my first .025 seconds of unhindered free fall.

You notice the oddest little things when you're nine hundred and fifty feet above the ground, having just stepped off the business side of a man-killing mountain. Things like:

—Lichen.

—The almost laughable ineffectiveness of "wind resistance" in the real world, despite its being such a bugaboo for designers of cars and gay-looking competitive bicycle clothes.

—"Does that ant realize he's eight hundred and fifty feet off the ground, or does he think that he's on the ground and he's wondering why I'm falling sideways?"

Halfway through that last thought, I was jolted out of my ruminations by a tree branch slapping me in the face. Which, honestly, I could have done without. Very shortly thereafter, I remember falling past an actual mountain climber—his belt heavy with pitons or spitons or whatever they're called—who watched me pass and exclaimed, "What the f---?"

At this point, I realized that I was about to die, and that's when my whole life flashed before my eyes. It seemed to go chronologically, but super-sped up.

I saw my first dog, Steven, when he was just a puppy. He was also falling through the air at a hundred and thirty-five miles per hour next to me, which seemed an unnecessarily cruel trick of the mind, considering that Steven had died a peaceful death of barking-induced throat cancer back around the time that my stepdad got wrongfully arrested for dog-kicking.

Then I saw my first girlfriend, and then my first girlfriend's mother (who was even hotter than the girlfriend). Then my first car. This was odd, considering that I've never actually owned a car—but I did distinctly see an '89 Toyota Corolla, which, now that I think about it, must have been my first rental, that weekend when I flew to Phoenix for a college friend's ill-advised wedding.

Between five hundred and four hundred and fifty feet above the ground, I saw the entirety of the movie "Arthur 2: On the Rocks," and had time to note, wistfully, that it was much funnier than I had remembered.

Around four hundred feet or so, I was struck by another metaphysical conundrum: What kind of person climbs four hundred feet up a sheer granite face just to write "You suck! Bababooey!" on an otherwise pristine boulder?

In the next .00075 seconds of free fall, I saw the rest of my life flash before my eyes. Everything up to and including the moment when I thought, Hey, if I turn around and retrace my steps right now it'll all be downhill from here, and I can—oops! What the—

At this point, I realized that it was time to calm what they call the "monkey mind," a concept I read about once in an in-flight-magazine article about meditation, and how it can help prevent the "non-useful" feelings that lead to incidents of air rage. I needed to make something positive of this experience. For instance, I could think up advice for the living from one who is about to die and is watching his life flash before his eyes. Here's what I came up with:

1. There are lots of boring parts in even the most interesting life. So get in the habit of sleeping with the TV on, so that eventually—when you have to watch your whole life flash before your eyes—you'll have something to look at during those long, dull hours when you're doing nothing but lying in bed asleep.

2. Encourage every person who shares your bed to sleep nude, on top of the covers. You'll never get tired of looking at your exes in the nude. Trust me.

3. Don't go to see bad movies that you know are going to be bad just to laugh at them. They're never as funny the second time around, when you're falling through the air and your friends aren't around to laugh along with you.

4. Give a thought to switching up your bathroom technique every now and then. When everything is sped up enough, life can start to seem like one long toilet-sit, periodically interrupted by tentative journeys out of the bathroom, which inevitably end in a return to the bathroom.

Around this point—a hundred feet above the ground—I realized that my death was imminent. I tried to rerun my favorite parts of my life one last time, but all that flashed before my eyes was everything that had happened during my last nine hundred feet of free-falling.

Imagine my surprise when my fall was broken by a band of nature enthusiasts, who were gathered around a patch of lichen, fighting over who'd get to look at it next through the magnifying glass. I can't even begin to imagine how fast each of their lives must have flashed before their eyes. (Except for the one who survived for a while and was medevaced to a treatment facility, where he expired; he had a good two hours to linger over everything that had flashed before his eyes.)

As for me, I didn't come out of this experience unscathed. I am in one of those full-body casts which you usually see only in comedies that involve skiing, and I'm writing this with my tongue—which probably explains why my prose has been so erotically charged. I apologize for that.

A near-death experience makes you realize just how short life is. As soon as I can get hold of a remote control that doesn't taste like other people's hands, the first thing I'm going to do is reprogram my TiVo's Season Pass and WishList settings, to make sure that I don't waste another precious moment watching a Discovery Channel special about people building a megabridge in Singapore or whatever. ♦

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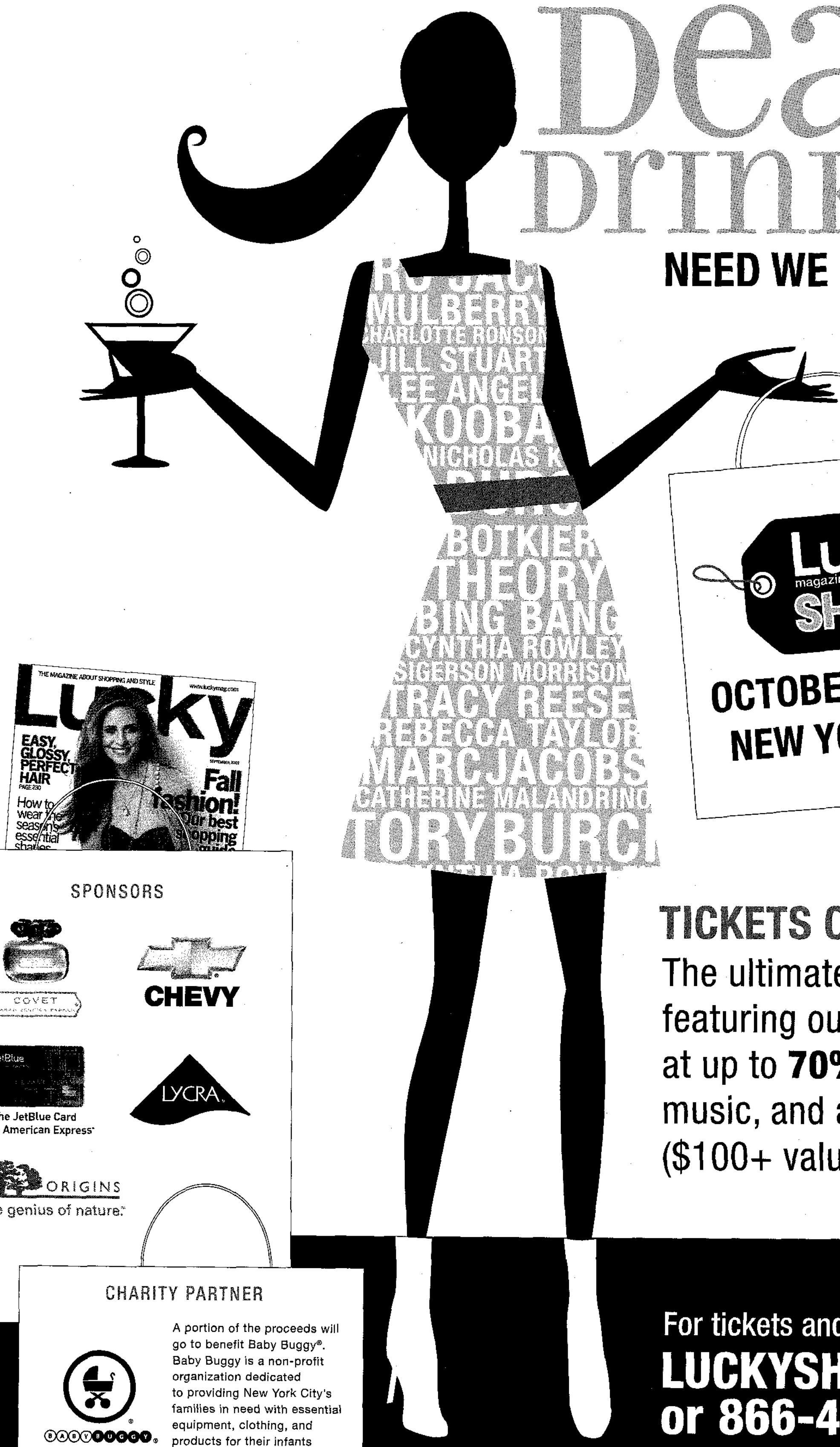
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PERSONAL HISTORY

# PARALLEL PLAY

*A lifetime of restless isolation explained.*

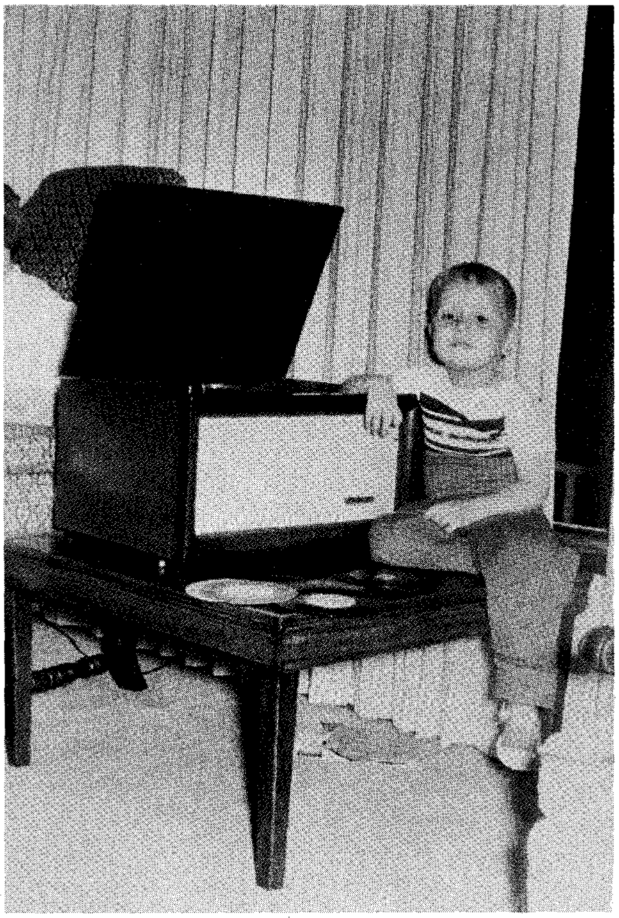
BY TIM PAGE

My second-grade teacher never liked me much, and one assignment I turned in annoyed her so extravagantly that the red pencil with which she scrawled "See me!" broke through the lined paper. Our class had been asked to write about a recent field trip, and, as was so often the case in those days, I had noticed the wrong things:

> Well, we went to Boston, Massachusetts through the town of Warrenville, Connecticut on Route 44A. It was very pretty and there was a church that reminded me of pictures of Russia from our book that is published by Time-Life. We arrived in Boston at 9:17. At 11 we went on a big tour of Boston on Gray Line 43, made by the Superior Bus Company like School Bus Six, which goes down Hunting Lodge Road where Maria lives and then on to Separatist Road and then to South Eagleville before it comes to our school. We saw lots of good things like the Boston Massacre site. The tour ended at 1:05. Before I knew it we were going home. We went through Warrenville again but it was too dark to see much. A few days later it was Easter. We got a cuckoo clock.

It is an unconventional but hardly unobservant report. In truth, I didn't care one bit about Boston on that spring day in 1963. Instead, I wanted to learn about Warrenville, a village a few miles northeast of the town of Mansfield, Connecticut, where we were then living. I had memorized the map of Mansfield, and knew all the school-bus routes by heart—a litany I would sing out to anybody I could corner. But Warrenville was in the town of Ashford, for which I had no guide, and I remember the blissful sense of resolution I felt when I certified that Route 44A crossed Route 89 in the town center, for I had long hypothesized that they might meet there. Of such joys and pains was my childhood composed.

I received a grade of "Unsatisfactory" in Social Development from the Mansfield Public Schools that year. I did not work to the best of my ability, did not show neatness and care in assignments, did not coöperate with the group, and did not exercise self-control. About the only positive assessment was that I worked well independently. Of course: then as now, it was all that I could do.



*The author's first and most powerful obsession was music.*

COURTESY TIM PAGE

In the years since the phrase became a cliché, I have received any number of compliments for my supposed ability to "think outside the box." Actually, it has been a struggle for me to perceive just what these "boxes" were—why they were there, why other people regarded them as important, where their borderlines might be, how to live safely within and without them. My efforts have been only partly successful: after fifty-two years, I am left with the melancholy sensation that my life has been spent in a perpetual state of parallel play, alongside, but distinctly apart from, the rest of humanity.

From early childhood, my memory was so acute and my wit so bleak that I was described as a genius—by my parents, by our neighbors, and even, on occasion, by the same teachers who gave me failing marks. I wrapped myself in this mantle, of course, as a poetic justification for behavior that might otherwise have been judged unhinged, and I did my best to believe in it. But the explanation made no sense. A genius at *what*? Were other "geniuses" so oblivious that they couldn't easily tell right from left and idly wet their pants into adolescence? What accounted for my rages and frustrations, for the imperious contempt I showed to people who were in a position to do me harm? Although I delighted in younger children, whom I could instruct and gently dominate, and I was thrilled when I ran across an adult willing to discuss my pet subjects, I could establish no connection with most of my classmates. My pervasive childhood memory is an excruciating awareness of my own strangeness.

Despite their roseate talk, my parents and my school put a good deal of effort into finding out precisely what was wrong with me. It was obvious that I was not "normal," especially by the straitened standards of the early nineteen-sixties. I have sometimes wondered whether the I.Q. scores with which I was credited were nudged upward by my father, who was both a professional educator with a keen interest in gifted children and the person who administered my most triumphant examinations. Whatever the case, while my younger brother and sister soared through school, academically and socially, I was consistently at or near the bottom of the class, and decidedly out of control—half asleep or aggressively assertive—much of the time.

And so, between the ages of seven and fifteen, I was given glucose-tolerance tests, anti-seizure medications, electroencephalograms, and an occasional Mogadon to shut me down at night. I suffered through a summer of Bible camp; exercise regimens were begun and abandoned; and the school even brought in a psychiatrist to grill me once a week. Somehow, every June, I was promoted to the next grade, having accomplished little to deserve it. Meanwhile, the more kindly homeroom teachers, knowing that I would be tormented on the playground, permitted me to spend recess periods indoors, where I memorized vast portions of the 1961 edition of the World Book Encyclopedia.

A brown carton in my basement contains most of the surviving documents of my childhood, and they present a pretty fair portrait of my pre-teen obsessions. There are meandering and implausible stories, none with happy endings; intricately detailed street maps of make-believe cities on which I worked silently for hours; and countless crayon drawings of grinning girls with shoulder-length hair and U-shaped smiles, their stick figures fleshed out only by exaggerated biceps. Other children collected coins or baseball cards; I tore obituaries of Sophie Tucker and David O. Selznick from the Hartford *Courant* and pasted them sloppily into a scrapbook.

In my darker moods, I think that the rest of my life can be encapsulated in a single sentence: I grew up and grew into other preoccupations, some of which have served me well. I became a music critic and culture writer, first for the *SoHo News*, and then for the *Times*, *Newsday*, and the Washington *Post*. In the middle of all this, I became enamored of the American author Dawn Powell, whose life and works I absorbed in much the same manner I had the World Book, and I spent five years editing her novels, short stories, plays, diaries, and letters and writing her first biography. I look back on these projects with a certain mystified satisfaction; I'm glad they were done, but it is as though they had been accomplished by somebody else, for the particular furies and fevers that impelled them have long since evaporated.

In the fall of 2000, in the course of what had become a protracted effort to identify—and, if possible, alleviate—my lifelong unease, I was told that I had Asperger's syndrome. I had never heard of the condition, which had been recognized by the American Psychiatric Association only six years earlier. Nevertheless, the diagnosis was one of those rare clinical confirmations which are met mostly with relief. Here, finally, was an objective explanation for some of my strengths and weaknesses, the simultaneous capacity for unbroken work and all-encompassing recall, linked inextricably to a driven, uncomfortable personality. And I learned that there were others like me—people who yearned for steady routines, repeated patterns, and a few cherished subjects, the driftwood that keeps us afloat.

The syndrome was identified, in 1944, by Hans Asperger, a Viennese pediatrician, who wrote, "For success in science or art, a dash of autism is essential." Yet Oliver Sacks makes a clear distinction between full-fledged autism and Asperger's syndrome. In *The New Yorker* some years ago, Sacks wrote that "people with Asperger's syndrome can tell us of their experiences, their inner feelings and states, whereas those with classical autism cannot. With classical autism there is no 'window,' and we can only infer. With Asperger's syndrome there is self-consciousness and at least some power to introspect and report."

In his 1998 book "Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals," Tony Attwood observed, "The person with Asperger's syndrome has no distinguishing physical features but is primarily viewed by other people as different because of their unusual quality of social behavior and conversation skills. For example, a woman with Asperger's Syndrome described how as a child she saw people moving into the house up the street, ran up to one of the new kids and, instead of the conventional greeting and request of 'Hi, you want to play?,' proclaimed, 'Nine times nine is equal to 81.' "

David Mamet, in his recent book "Bambi vs. Godzilla," discerned redeeming qualities in the condition. Considering filmmakers past and present, he stated that "it is not impossible that Asperger's syndrome helped make the movies. The symptoms of this developmental disorder include early precocity, a great ability to manage masses of information, a lack of ability to mix with groups in age-appropriate ways, igno-

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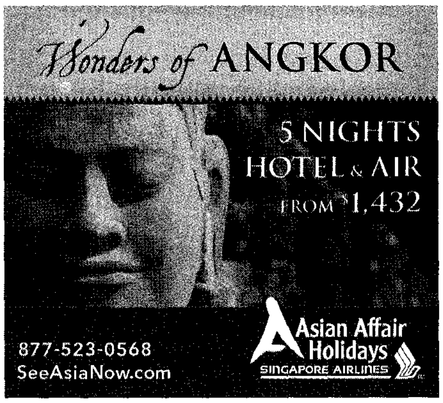
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rance of or indifference to social norms, high intelligence, and difficulty with transitions, married to a preternatural ability to concentrate on the minutia of the task at hand."

The Asperger's spectrum ranges from people barely more abstracted than a stereotypical "absent-minded professor" to the full-blown, albeit highly functioning, autistic. Symptoms of Asperger's have been attributed ex post facto to successful figures, but these are the fortunate ones—persons able to invent outlets for their ever-welling monomanias. Many are not so lucky, and some end up institutionalized or homeless. (In the late nineteen-seventies, I saw a ragged, haunted man who spent urgent hours dodging the New York transit police to trace the dates and lineage of the Hapsburg nobility on the walls of subway stations.) For some—record collectors with every catalogue number at hand, theatre buffs with first-night casts memorized, children who draw precise architectural blueprints of nineteenth-century silk mills—a cluster of facts can be both luminous and lyric, something around which to construct a life.

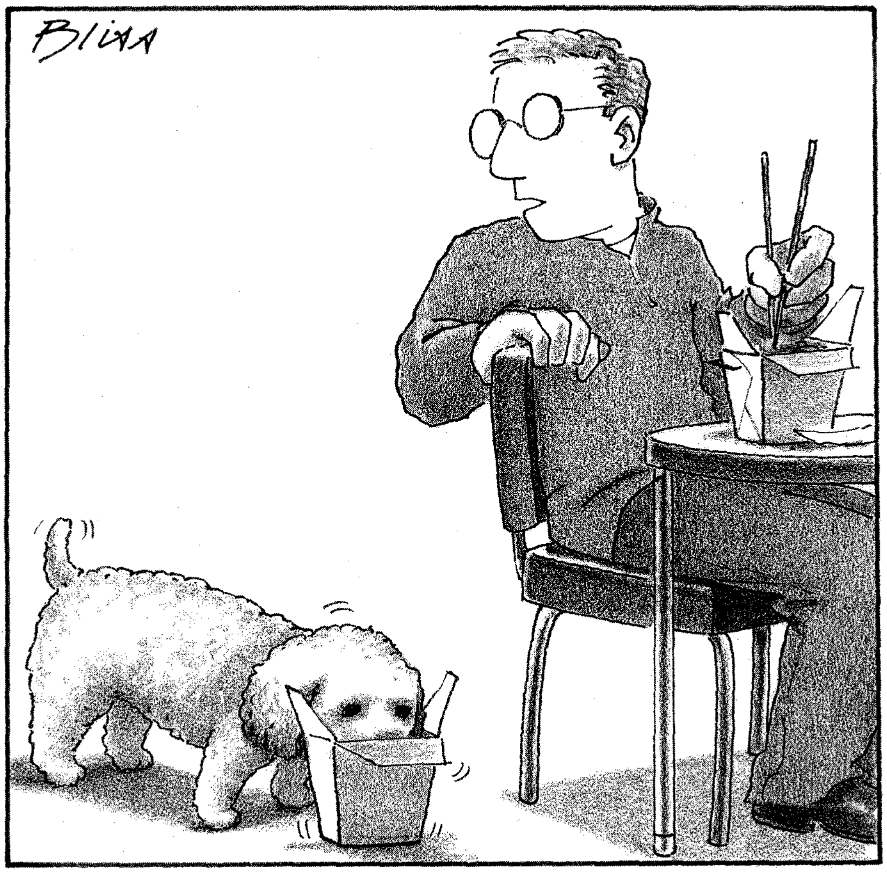
We are informally referred to as "Aspies," and if we are not very, very good at something we tend to do it very poorly. Little in life comes naturally—except for our random, inexplicable, and often uncontrollable gifts—and, even more than most children, we assemble our personalities unevenly, piece by piece, almost robotically, from models we admire. (I remember the deliberate decision to appropriate one teacher's mischievous grin and darting eyes, which I found so charming that I thought they might work for me, too.)

So preoccupied are we with our inner imperatives that the outer world may overwhelm and confuse. What anguished pity I used to feel for piñatas at birthday parties, those papier-mâché donkeys with their amiable smiles about to be shattered by little brutes with bats. On at least one occasion, I begged for a stay of execution and eventually had to be taken home, weeping, convinced that I had just witnessed the braining of a new and sympathetic acquaintance.

Caring for inanimate objects came easily. Learning to make genuine connections with people—much as I desperately wanted them—was a bewildering process. I felt like an alien, always about to be exposed. Or, to adapt another hoary but useful analogy, not only did I not see the forest for the trees; I was so intensely distracted that I missed the trees for the species of lichen on their bark.

My first and most powerful obsession was music—the same records played again and again while I watched them spin, astonished at their evocation of aural worlds that I not only instinctively understood even as a toddler but in which I actually felt comfortable. I was both terrified of and tantalized by death (which was absolutely real to me from earliest childhood), and by the way recordings restored Enrico Caruso and Nellie Melba to life for a few minutes, ghostly visitors who had returned to sing for me at 78 r.p.m., through a hiss of shellac and antiquity.

When I was ten, I became fascinated by silent films, the visual complement to my old records. I spent hours at the library of the University of Connecticut, a few minutes' walk from home, researching the lives of actors and actresses on microfilm, and recall the genuine sense of mourning that came over me when I saw Barbara La Marr's sad, youthful face on an obituary page from 1926. Not surprisingly, "Sunset Boulevard" was my favorite "talkie" (I actually called them that—in 1965!), and I'd regularly set the alarm and wake in the middle of the night to watch Chester Conklin or Louise Dresser take on minor roles in some B movie that the Worcester, Massachusetts, UHF station put on when nobody else was watching.



*"Save some for Mommy, Princess."*

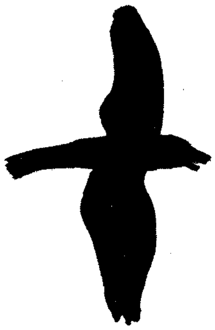
"I despise the Beatles and their ilk," this remarkably Blimpish young man proclaimed in a school paper shortly after the first Ed Sullivan show, when other boys my age were growing their hair long and learning to play the guitar. My favorite pop musician then was the Scottish comedian Harry Lauder, a star in vaudeville and music halls at the beginning of the last century, who told obscure jokes in brogue and sang through exaggerated hiccups in a state of pretend intoxication. The depth of my admiration for Lauder now baffles me as much as the steady diet of horehound drops I adopted as snack food, or my insistence, much of one autumn, that I wear a rabbit's foot in each buttonhole of my shirt, which I kept tightly fastened up to the neck. But nobody could have persuaded me to abandon these quirks, and any attempt to do so would have been taken as a physical threat and reduced me to hysteria.

A friend published a sweet autobiography entitled "Thank You, Everyone," in which she expressed gratitude to everybody who had influenced her, ranging from Woody Allen to my sister Betsy. If I were to create a similar book, I would call it "Sorry, Everyone," and apologize for my youthful cluelessness: To the girl in seventh grade with the protruding jawbone (it never occurred to me that she would not share my enthusiasm for her unusually simian features). To the boy who came over to my house in the middle of my Caruso phase and endured a precious weekend afternoon comparing recordings of "Celeste Aida." To the perplexed young women from early adolescence who might have become lovers had I understood that their sudden friendship and proximity had any sort of physical impetus. Instead, I chattered on about this and that, rarely making eye contact, and soon they vanished, in search of more game and grounded potential partners. Sorry, everyone. I didn't understand.

It was hard for me to be touched. I froze when I was hugged by anybody who was not a relative, and I made love like the Tin Man until I was well into adulthood. Like many children before and since, I recoiled when fundamental facts about the reproduction of the species were explained to me (there was, typically for the time and the place, no suggestion that new pleasures might be involved, and the physical act, examined through an anxious, pre-sexual eye, sounded bizarre). Shortly after this enlightenment, my parents threw a party, attended by their closest friends. I watched their athletic, fortyish bodies, properly clothed, in mortified amazement, and then took a recount of their children. Oh, my God, I thought. They did *that* three times!

Anything related to the human body seemed to me bad news. In the fourth grade, when my affliction was most intense, I would be herded out to play kickball during our physical-education classes. Teams were chosen, and I was embedded among the strongest kids, to provide some chance of even battle. In memory, it is forever bases loaded with two outs when my turn at the plate comes, and I am as well suited as a giraffe to meet the big red ball that rolls toward me with frightening speed.

Still, for a moment the same people who generally disdained or bullied me became my friends, cheering me on to hitherto unsuspected athletic glory: "You can do it, Tim!" If I could make the ball lose its gravity, as my best pal, Annie, did so effortlessly with those balletic *whomps* from her long legs, I might redeem myself. Our gym teacher, Miss B.—scowling, beefy, and, after four decades, the only person in the world I just might swerve to hit on a deserted road—had no such illusions and waited for the inevitable, with her festering contempt and ready whistle. Grinning stupidly, shirttail out and flapping, underwear pulled halfway up my back, I would lope toward the ball, which would eventually collide with my ankle or heel and then bounce off into the woods or into the waiting arms of the catcher. My chance was up, and I was a freak once more.



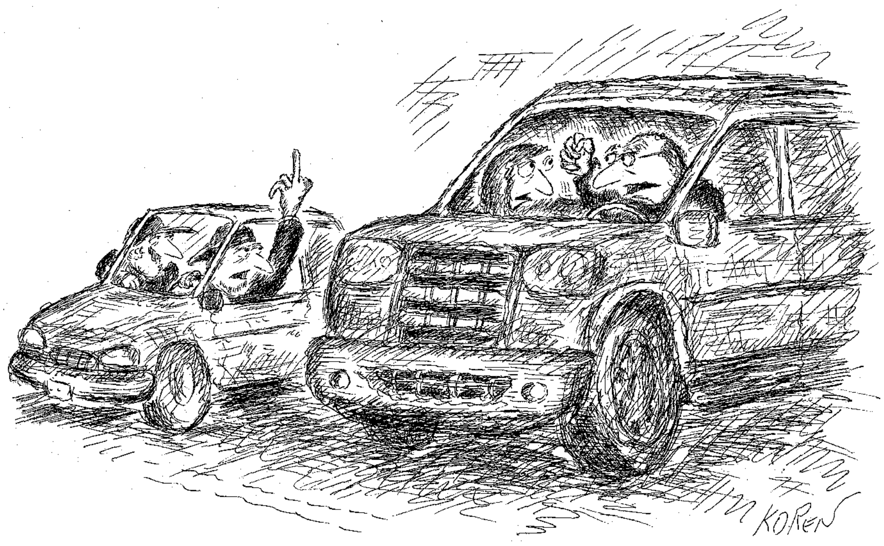
"*So*?" I wanted to scream. "There are things that I *know;* things that I can *do.* Can you name the duet from La Bohème that Antonio Scotti and Geraldine Farrar recorded in Camden, New Jersey, on October 6, 1909? What was the New York address of D. W. Griffith's first studio? How many books by *David Graham Phillips* have you read? Who was Adelaide *Crapsey*? I learned to play the entire Chopin Prelude in E Minor in a single night!" And then tears, of course, and the taunts redoubled.

The class work, hardly less humiliating, was at least more private. If I wasn't deeply interested in a subject, I couldn't concentrate on it at all—those dreadful algebra classes, those Bunsen burners, the mystifying and now deservedly extinct slide rule! Late in each semester, when it became obvious to me that I had no idea what I was supposed to have learned, I'd attend some makeup classes and try desperately to pay attention. As the teacher rattled on, I would grind my teeth, twirl the tops of my socks around my index finger—once I poked myself repeatedly through my pocket with a pin—anything to keep my mind engaged. But it was impossible: a leaf would fall outside the open window, or I'd notice the pattern of the veins on a girl's hand, or a shout from the playground would trigger a set of irresistible associations that carried me back to another day.

And then the dream was ruptured by the sound of a bell; the class was irrevocably over, and I knew no more about quadratic equations or beryllium than I did an hour before. Failure was now assured, and the countdown began to the Dies Irae, when my report card would land me in trouble again, for my father was incredulous that a boy who blithely recited the names and dates of the United States' Presidents and their wives couldn't manage to pass elementary math and science. I grew enormously fond of my father in later life, but he terrified me then. He lived until 2005, long enough to recognize, through my diagnosis, some of the problems that had vexed him throughout his own career and, better yet, to know and delight in my three children, to whom he showed a serene gentleness.

My grades, always disastrous, only worsened as I grew older and more was expected of me. Nevertheless, by the age of twelve I was able to storm through idiosyncratic renditions of most of the easier Chopin pieces and of the simpler passages in his larger works. That was also the year that I finished my first novel—fifty pages of it, filled with a narrative invention that I've never been able to recapture. The manuscript was lost long ago, but I do recall that I killed off my central character, a cat, by having him eat "badly prepared fish." I am still in possession of a school report on "Making a Living in the Amazon," which we had been required to work on for a week. My contribution read, in its entirety, "In the dense, rainy, rain forest, it is hard to make a living. One way is fishing in the river that is from a mile wide to a 100 miles wide. Brazil nut collecting is another way. You can gather manioc. You are very limited as to what to do for a living in the Amazon rain forest."

By way of comparison, here is the be-



*"This is not a conversation you need to join."*

ginning of a twenty-five-hundred-word story that I wrote the same month, typing it on my father's gray oversized IBM electric in a single evening:

> Nobody knew why the rain had not stopped. The weather report had said four in ten for light showers in the early morning. But here it was: 5 o'clock. And it was pouring.
>
> There was nothing to stop Lady Lieg from leaving the library. She had all the equipment, a fold-up umbrella, galoshes, etcetera and so on. But there was this book on Alla Nazimova that just begged to be taken. How could she resist it?

How indeed? In no way am I making a case that I possessed any innate talent for fiction (although it took a certain prescience to hypothesize a biography of Nazimova some thirty years before Gavin Lambert's volume was published). But, amid the usual obfuscating data, there are flashes of verisimilitude and understanding, all of which was new to me. By then, I had discovered Maugham, and Hemingway, and Camus, and had begun to trace in literature some emotional pathways that would fulfill me infinitely more than the road map of a Connecticut town.

Oddly, the book that helped pull me into the human race was Emily Post's "Etiquette," which I had picked up in a moment of early-teen hippie scorn, fully intending to mock what I was sure would be an "uncool" justification of bourgeois rules and regulations. Instead, the book offered clearly stated reasons for courtesy, gentility, and scrupulousness—reasons that I could respect, understand, and implement. It suggested ways to inaugurate conversations without launching into a lecture, reminded me of the importance of listening as well as speaking, and convinced me that manners, properly understood, existed to make other people feel comfortable, rather than (as I had suspected) to demonstrate the practitioner's social superiority. I revelled in Post's guidance and absorbed her lessons. And, typically, I took them too far: even today, I would never dream of addressing a teen-age busboy in a small-town diner as anything other than "sir."

I found Emily Post among my mother's paperbacks, but most of the books I read came from the UConn library, where I was always made to feel at home, even in high rabbit's-foot regalia. Every room held treasures, but my favorite spot was the listening station at the Music Library, where, one blessed afternoon, I put on some bulbous headphones that made me look like Mickey Mouse and heard the prelude to "Das Rheingold" for the first time.

The word that year was "psychedelic," and I had no idea what it meant, although I had gleaned that "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," Peter Max posters, certain novels by Hermann Hesse, and the whole city of San Francisco were awash in this new and magical quality. And then Wagner's depiction of the River Rhine started to play and a flowering drone filled my head; time was suspended, and I was transformed.

Much has been made of Wagner's harmonic restlessness—of the way that a work such as "Tristan und Isolde" led inexorably to the so-called "atonality" of Arnold Schoenberg and his myriad disciples. But what astonished me in "Das Rheingold," although I couldn't have stated it then, was the opposite quality: the opera's unprecedented harmonic stasis, the manner in which it explored the churning inner life of sustained chords, from the three amazing minutes of E-Flat Major that set the score in motion through the affirmation of the Gods, Valhalla, and the eternal D-Flat Major at the end.

This was music that one could dwell in, a sort of sonic weather. I loved its resistance to change, its protracted unfolding, its mantric sense of perpetual return. A large part of my career has been devoted to writing about music, and I date my first more or less mature criticism to the world première of another composition that shared some of these same qualities, Steve Reich's "Music For 18 Musicians," which I heard in New York, at the Town Hall, in April of 1976.

I arrived back at my Third Avenue walkup, knowing that I'd never fall asleep, with an urgent need to react to the work. What I had heard struck me as so beautiful and unusual, so distinctly of its time but in such radical opposition to most "new music" of the seventies, that I wrote through the night, attempting to summarize my impressions. Five years later, I published a study of what by then had come to be known as minimalism, and it incorporated some of what I wrote that night:

> Minerva-like, the music springs to life fully formed—from dead silence to fever pitch. . . . Imagine concentrating on a challenging modern painting that becomes just a little different every time you shift your attention from one detail to another. Or trying to impose a frame on a running river—making it a finite, enclosed work of art yet leaving its kinetic quality unsullied, leaving it flowing freely on all sides. It has been done. Steve Reich has framed the river.

Today, I find myself wondering if I would have responded so profoundly to this starkly reiterative, rigidly patterned music had I not had Asperger's syndrome. This is not an aesthetic cop-out: I can make an intellectual case for minimalism, and I am hardly the only writer who has done so. But its initial appeal for me was purely visceral. As the Quakers might say, this music spoke to my condition. (I would later experience a similar, curiously mechanical limbic ecstasy upon a first encounter with "Last Year at Marienbad.")

It was never difficult for me to articulate my feelings about anything external. I've rarely run short of opinions, well founded or otherwise. But deeper emotions reduced me (and, to some extent, reduce me still) to aching silence, especially when I feared that I would be exposed, misunderstood, or ridiculed. I empathized with Rostand's Cyrano (a serious rival to Ferdinand the Bull in my private pantheon of literary heroes), who was too terrified to utter the crucial words to the woman he loved. I suffer little stage fright when it comes to public speaking or appearances on radio or television, but I continue to find unstructured participation in small social gatherings agonizing. It would be easier for me to improvise an epic poem at a sold-out Yankee Stadium than to approach an attractive stranger across the room and strike up a conversation.

Falling in love surprised me; I had never imagined sustained contentment, and certainly not in the company of another person. Yet here it was: even making the bed together in the morning, an act that had hitherto struck me as Sisyphean, took on meaning, as the prelude to another gloriously ordinary day, to be followed by tea, the newspapers, a couple hours of work, and then lunch in the neighborhood. While it lasted, everything was enhanced; I just wish this were the time and place to write that first happy ending.

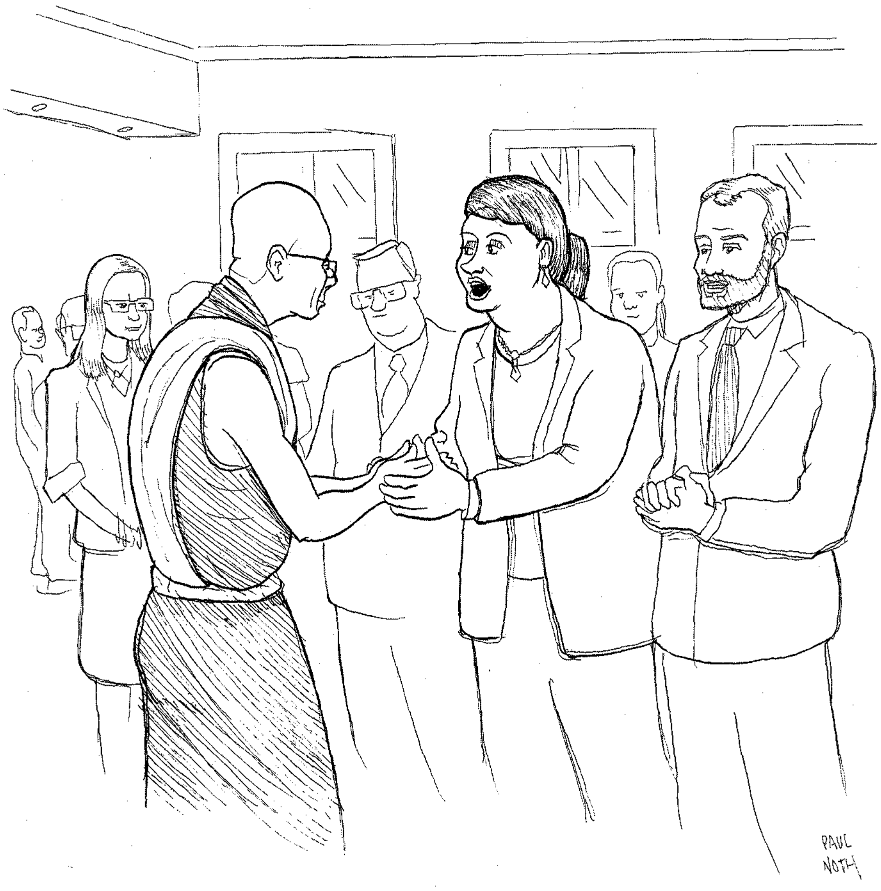
The fact that my understanding of affection, comradeship, and human empathy has been hard-won rather than being wired in from the start does not make these feelings less genuine. I am still friends with most of the people I was friends with thirty years ago, and I worry about them daily (here I concur with Virgil Thomson, who once said that worry was one form of prayer that he found acceptable). My intimates, new and old, are permanent fixtures in my experience, and that some of them—too many—are no longer living has not diminished my devotion.

I've transcended Lauder and horehounds, and my passions range widely, if spottily, through any number of fields. Laughter, meditation, therapy, Valium, antidepressants, liberal helpings of wine and beer, loyal and patient friends, forgiving children, a congenial work situation that allows me to spend much of my time alone—all these have helped me to carry on. Overstimulation remains a positive horror, and I am most comfortable in dark or neutral clothing, under gray skies. I thrive on routines: I like to walk into the same restaurants, sit in the same seats, and order the same meals, and I took it personally when the PanAm Building started passing itself off as MetLife.

There is no cure for Asperger's syndrome, and there is even some question whether it should be considered an affliction or merely a "difference"—one of many human variants. The reporter Amy Harmon wrote in the *Times* that some autistics view themselves as part of "an ad hoc human rights movement," and view autism itself as "an integral part of their identities, much more like a skin than a shell, and not one they care to shed." A group called Aspies for Freedom runs a Web site that celebrates what it calls "neurodiversity," arguing that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in an autistic condition.

I apply Romain Rolland's practical credo—"pessimism of the intelligence; optimism of the will"—to my aspirations, but I cannot pretend that Asperger's has not made much of my existence miserable and isolated (how *will* I get to sleep tonight?). I hope that young Aspies, informed by recent literature on the subject, will find the world somewhat less challenging than I have.

By now, I am fairly used to myself, and my symptoms bloom publicly only on rare occasions. Waiting for the check after a Washington lunch in 2005, I realized that it was both the hundred and fortieth anniversary of Lincoln's assassination and exactly forty years since the murderers of the Clutter family ("In Cold Blood") were put to death in Kansas. I doubt that my companion was equally thrilled by this coincidence, especially when elaborated upon in such sudden, bursting detail in the middle of a lovely spring day, but at least I controlled the temptation to launch into a lengthy exculpation of Mrs. Surratt. I count that as progress. ♦



*"I would kill for your metabolism."*

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

# MAYBERRY MAN

*Is what New York never liked about Rudy Giuliani exactly what the heartland loves?*

BY PETER J. BOYER

The South Carolina State House, a grand, copper-domed structure in downtown Columbia, is a showplace for the state's long history of hellbent defiance. The most prominent feature on the grounds is a monument to fallen Confederate soldiers, whose virtues "plead for just judgment of the cause in which they perished." Beside it, atop a thirty-foot pole, waves the Rebel flag, the object of fierce national debate a decade ago, when it flew above the capitol dome, and no less conspicuous now, in its new location. Among the nearby statuary stands a life-size likeness of Benjamin R. (Pitchfork Ben) Tillman, the four-term United States senator who led the movement that disenfranchised black voters in 1895 and instituted Jim Crow. Inside the building, cast-iron staircases rise to an elegant lobby, and portraits honor the men who shaped the state's querulous history, including John C. Calhoun, who contrived the rationale—nullification—for Southern secession, and Strom Thurmond, who led the South out of the Democratic Party. The lobby opens at either end to the state's two legislative chambers, which, in March, ratified an amendment to the state constitution that bans not only gay marriage but gay civil unions. That month, the state house of representatives also passed a bill requiring any woman considering abortion to reflect upon an ultrasound image of the fetus.

It was here that Rudolph Giuliani, New York's thrice-married, anti-gun, pro-gay, pro-choice former mayor, found himself one morning in April, in what appeared to be a critical moment in his young campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination. The previous day, during a campaign stop in Florida, he was asked by CNN's Dana Bash if he supported the public funding of abortions. Giuliani seemed flustered by the question and finally answered, "If that's the status of the law, I would, yes."

Even before Giuliani began his run for the Presidency, the consensus, sounded in news columns, blogs, and political journals, was that he could not survive scrutiny of his political heterodoxy and his personal imperfections by the Republican Party's conservative base.

Now, as Giuliani made his way into the capitol, his candidate smile firmly fixed, he was met by reporters. "Mayor, you talk about being a straight shooter," one said. "Is this position you have on abortion something that's going to shoot a hole in a key Republican plank?"

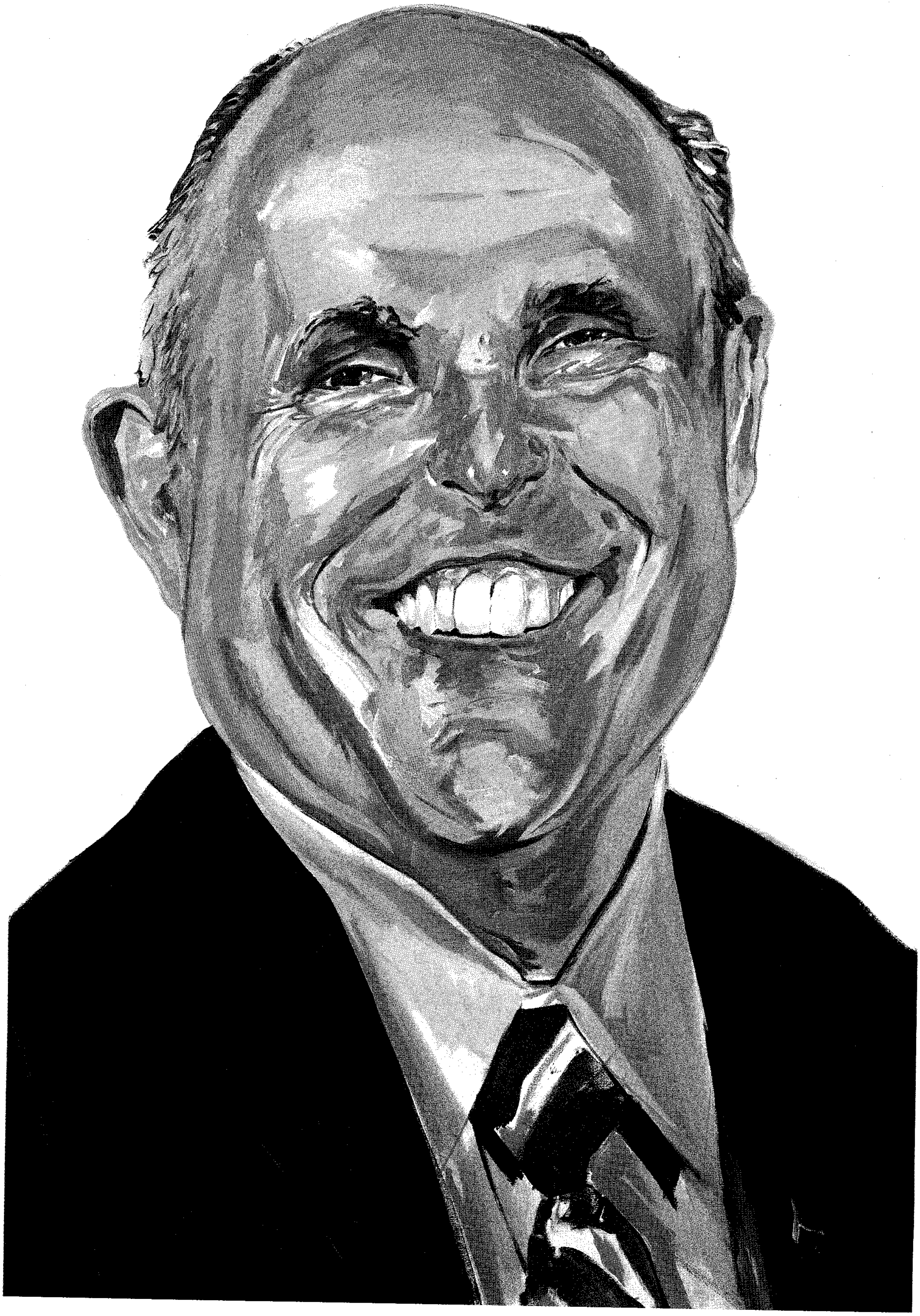
Giuliani said he was comfortable with the fact that some voters would never agree with him, a point he chose to illustrate by telling a story about New York. When he was a novice political candidate, he said, the late Louis Lefkowitz, the longest-serving attorney general in New York history, had taught him the basics of retail campaigning on the streets of the city. "I'm walking along the street, shaking hands," Giuliani recounted, "and this guy started questioning me about some position or other, and he was opposed to me on this position. And I spent twenty minutes trying to convince him. And at some point Louie put his arm around me, and he said"—here Giuliani's voice assumed a gravelly, mock-Lower East Side timbre—"'Hey, kid, you're not gonna get this guy's vote.'" Giuliani chuckled at his story. The consensus seemed validated—this was a man wholly out of place in the Republican South. "He's toast," the Clemson University political scientist Dave Woodard told the Associated Press that day.

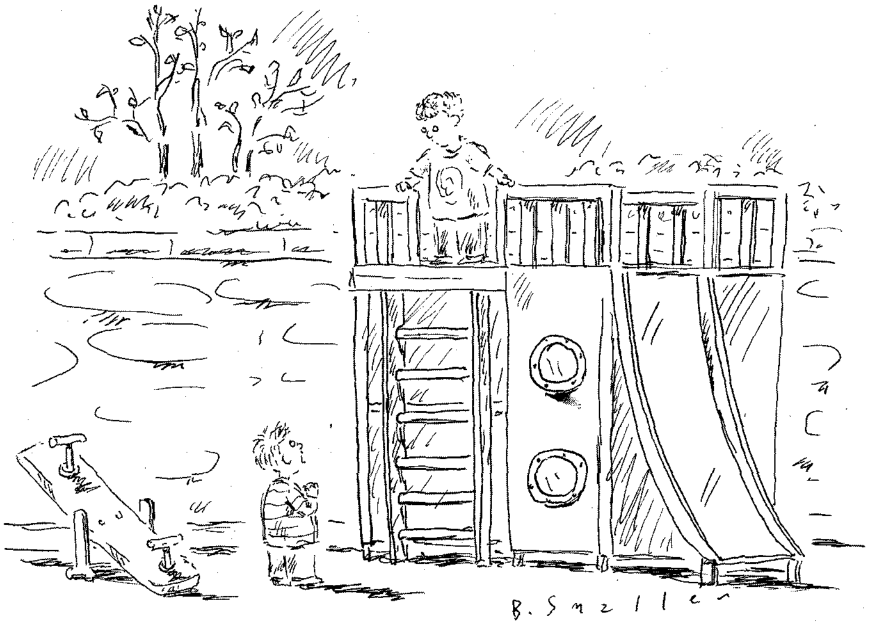
When Giuliani left Columbia, he travelled to Charleston, where a group of prosperous-looking potential donors and political insiders were waiting to see him. A closed-door meeting, in a private room at a restaurant called Magnolia's, was scheduled for 1 P.M. But at that moment Giuliani's caravan, including the candidate, in a black S.U.V., and his security team and campaign staff, was creeping through traffic in the busy Market Center of the old city, several blocks away. It was a warm, bright day, and the streets were jammed. Giuliani asked his driver to stop. He got out and started walking toward the restaurant. He was immediately mobbed. "Give her a run for her money, Mayor!" one woman screamed, feeling no need to mention Hillary Clinton by name. A tourist carriage rolled by, and the driver shouted, "Hey, Mayor! I've got three votes for you right here!" Giuliani—wearing his signature dark suit, white dress shirt, and tie—signed autographs, posed for pictures, and even knelt on the sidewalk to be photographed with a dog. "That's our next President, right there," said Chris Workman, a Myrtle Beach firefighter and former McCain supporter, who had chatted with Giuliani with a dip of snuff bulging from his lip.

At Magnolia's, Giuliani's advance people tried to fill time. Barry Wynn, his South Carolina campaign chairman, talked up his candidate's chances, solicited donations, and took questions from the waiting group seated before him. Someone asked what effect the Christian right would have on Giuliani's prospects. "Good question," Wynn replied. He lives in the Greenville-Spartanburg area, the home of Bob Jones University. In South Carolina, another way of saying Christian right is "Greenville Republicans," the group credited with John McCain's undoing in his 2000 run against George W. Bush. Wynn's uncle was Lester Maddox, the axe-handle-wielding Atlanta segregationist who became governor of Georgia. Wynn himself is a

PHILIP BURKE

*When Giuliani's tenure as mayor ended, he left behind a city that was grateful, and more than a little relieved to see him go.*





*"I'm not a scaredy-cat—I'm phobic."*

former state Party chairman. "I've already talked to a lot of people I consider very hard-core social conservatives, part of the religious right, who are supporting Rudy Giuliani," Wynn said. "I think this idea that someone just blows a whistle and all of a sudden people go heading off in one direction—it doesn't happen that way. It's a little bit of a myth that's created by the press."

Giuliani finally arrived, and after a few remarks he asked for questions from the gathering. When the subject of public funding of abortion came up, Giuliani did not invoke Louis Lefkowitz. He said he knew that many people would disagree with his position on abortion and other social issues. "But what I ask them to do if they disagree is to take a look at my whole record and see if, in the context of my whole record, I still wouldn't be the best person to lead the country right now, given the threat we have from terrorism." Here he paused and added, "And, I think, given the threat we have from Democrats." The audience laughed. Giuliani went on, "Which is not the same thing." The audience laughed again. "The Democrats will lead us to more socialism-type solutions to our problems."

Among those smiling appreciatively at Giuliani's remarks was retired Rear Admiral William L. Schachte, seated several rows back. Schachte gained notoriety in 2004 as a key figure in the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth campaign against John Kerry. Schachte had been Kerry's commanding officer in Vietnam and, in August, 2004, declared that he was on Kerry's boat the night Kerry saw combat action that brought him his first Purple Heart. Schachte asserted that Kerry had not encountered enemy fire that night. (Kerry and two of the men who served with him have said that Schachte wasn't on the boat.)

Schachte, a native of Charleston, is a Catholic who describes himself as "a devout Christian." He has contributed twenty-three hundred dollars to Giuliani, the maximum amount allowed for an individual donor. I asked him what attracted him to Giuliani's candidacy. "I was in New York before Rudy, after Rudy, and during Rudy," he said. "And that was the tale of the tape." Schachte said that he had been lastingly impressed by Giuliani's governance of the city in the face of a political and media culture that was pointedly unsympathetic. He especially admired the way that Giuliani stood up to hostile reporters at his daily press conferences. "He's tough," Schachte said.

Giuliani filed papers to form a Presidential exploratory committee last November 10th, three days after the voter rebuke of Republicans that narrowly placed both houses of Congress under Democratic control. The election seemed a warrant for a candidacy such as Giuliani's, with its promise of reaching beyond the Republican base; but that promise also contained Giuliani's greatest peril. He could not be nominated without the base, which holds media-certified moderates like McCain and Senator Chuck Hagel, of Nebraska, in contempt. McCain had been admired in Washington for his ability to find consensus with Democrats, but that was his undoing with the talk-radio wing of the Republican Party. Giuliani's challenge was to convince Republicans that his social positions should not be held against him any more than the color of his eyes—he was from New York, he couldn't help it. Giuliani had to demonstrate that he was one of them, and that their enemies were his enemies, too.

The base was willing to be convinced. Giuliani has led the Republican field in the national polls from the start, partly because of his September 11th celebrity but also because of his September 10th celebrity. The common refrain among New Yorkers is that although Giuliani showed leadership on the day of the terrorist attacks, in the preceding months he had been a spent and isolated lame duck, his viability sapped by churlishness and the spectacle of his unattractive personal dramas. But to many in the heartland Giuliani was heroic for what he did in New York before September 11th: his policy prescriptions and, mostly, his taming of the city's liberal political culture—his famous crackdown on squeegee-men panhandlers, his workfare program, his attacks on controversial museum exhibits ("The idea of . . . so-called works of art in which people are throwing elephant dung at a picture of the Virgin Mary is sick!"), and the like. Speaking before the Alabama legislature this spring, he received a standing ovation, and Governor Bob Riley told him, "One of these days, you have to tell me how you *really* cleaned up New York." To conservatives, pre-Giuliani New York was a study in failed liberalism, a city that had surrendered to moral and physical decay, crime, racial hucksterism, and ruinous economic pathologies. Perhaps the most common words that Giuliani heard when he travelled around the country this spring were epithets aimed at his city ("a crime-infested cesspool," one Southern politician declared), offered without fear of giving offense. Giuliani cheerfully agreed.

Giuliani's Presidential candidacy made its début in early March, at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, in Washington. The event is a gathering of feverish ideologues, eager for a battle cry, such as that provided by the speaker preceding Giuliani, Wayne LaPierre, of the National Rifle Association, who urged the audience to throw "a new Boston Tea Party." When George Will introduced Giuliani, he described him as a Margaret Thatcher conservative and someone "for whom pugnacity is a political philosophy."

The audience greeted Giuliani enthusiastically, but what happened next was puzzling. Giuliani addressed the crowd like a man who hadn't expected to be called on—or, worse, like a man who felt that he'd done his part by showing up. He paid homage to Ronald Reagan, then spoke disjointedly about his record in New York, the war on terror, and "the second most important thing that I'm worried about"—education. It was thin stuff for this crowd, as Will later groused. "Rudy Giuliani came in and informally meandered a bit," he said on ABC's "This Week." "And a lot of the energy seeped out of the room."

Over the next several weeks, Giuliani campaigned as though he hadn't yet made the distinction between celebrity and candidacy. After leaving office, in 2002, he started a consulting firm, Giuliani Partners, and embarked on a series of highly lucrative lecture tours, commanding the transportation (Gulfstream IV), the accommodation (a two-bedroom suite, plus four rooms for his entourage), and the remuneration (up to a hundred thousand dollars per appearance) accorded only to the highest tier. Now he seemed bemused by questions that he should have easily anticipated, and his answers made him seem glib, or uninformed. When, on a campaign trip to Florida, he was asked whether he supported the controversial 2005 intervention in the Terri Schiavo case by the President and Congress (then controlled by Republicans), Giuliani couldn't quite say. "I believe I did," he responded. "I don't, I—it's a while ago and I think I said that I thought every effort should be made to keep her alive. I don't know that I supported the whole thing to the very end, but I am not sure now."

This Rudy Giuliani, with his new wealth, his new wife, and his new, natural haircut (replacing the familiar comb-over), seemed plainly unready for the mission he had undertaken. At the first Republican debate, held in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, in California, with Nancy Reagan in the audience, the ten Republican candidates were asked whether it would be "a good day for Americans" when Roe v. Wade was overturned. All the respondents answered that it would, except Giuliani, who said, "It would be O.K." He said that it would "be O.K. also if a strict-constructionist judge viewed it as precedent."

It was a disastrous performance, and failed to placate critics on the right who had been voicing their disappointment in the candidate for several weeks. "There is an embarrassing ad-hoc-ness, a bush-leagueness to this," the columnist and former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan remarked in the *Wall Street Journal*. "It's as if he hasn't thought it through, as if he's just deciding everything each day. But by the time you're running for president you should have decided."

Those most dismayed were Giuliani's advocates in the press, who knew that he was failing to make his case to conservatives. In a remarkable put-down, John Podhoretz, a conservative New York *Post* columnist who had touted Giuliani as the one Presidential candidate who could stop Hillary Clinton, addressed him in an "open letter" that questioned his competence. He wrote that "something strange" was going on, and warned, "If you keep winging it this way, you're going to fly off a cliff."

Giuliani's supporters longed for the old Rudy, who could marshal the facts, vanquish his foes, and then, for good measure, berate the "jerks." That was a moderate the movement could love.

Over the years, Giuliani has often spoken of his childhood in Brooklyn, giving special place to a story about the discordance of growing up a Yankees fan in the shadow of Ebbets Field. His father, Harold, a Yankees partisan from East Harlem, once dressed young Rudy in Yankee pinstripes and sent him out to play in the Dodger-mad streets of Brooklyn. Too young to have any say in the matter, Rudy was set upon by the neighborhood toughs, Dodger fans all. A gang of boys seized him, placed a noose around his neck, and threatened to lynch him. (His grandmother intervened.) In one recounting, to John Tierney, of the *Times*, a dozen years ago, Giuliani said that the incident was his proudest moment, because he refused to renounce his team. "I kept telling them: 'I am a Yankee fan. I am a Yankee fan. I'm gonna stay a Yankee fan,'" he recounted. "To me it was like being a martyr: I'm not gonna give up my religion. You're not gonna change me."

Giuliani has said that the experience reveals much about his character: he is, by his account, the stalwart, the lone defender of the cause, even unto martyrdom. At the time that Giuliani spoke with Tierney, he was midway through his first term as mayor, having already achieved a lot, and having already earned the headline "THE HOLY TERROR." Whatever lesson Harold Giuliani meant to impart to his son, he certainly provided him with a motif for the narrative of his public life.

Harold Giuliani died, of prostate cancer, in 1981, but he continued to assert a commanding presence in his son's life. Both he and his wife, Helen, were children of Italians who came to America in the great migration wave of the early twentieth century. Rudolph William Louis Giuliani, born in 1944, was brought up within a tight family circle filled with uncles who wore the uniforms of the police and fire departments. Rudy idolized his father, a thick, bespectacled former boxer who managed a tavern on Kingston Avenue, in Flatbush. In his eyes, Harold was a model of strength and courage, uneducated but gifted with a native wisdom. Even now, Giuliani routinely quotes his father about the value of work or the nature of courage, or recites how his father's words helped him through the crisis of September 11th. Harold wanted his son to be tough, but he also insisted that he be honest, and he harped on the issue so relentlessly—never cheat another man, never steal, never try to bend the law—that Rudy sometimes thought he was overdoing it. He sensed, rightly, that there was some hidden part of his father's life that might explain it.

Harold had dropped out of school at fifteen, worked briefly as a plumber's helper, and hung out on the streets, where his violent temper earned him the reputation of a brawler. Harold was arrested for burglary and sentenced to probation by the Children's Court, and in 1934, at the height of the Depression, he and an accomplice set upon a Borden's milkman as he was making a morning collection call, robbing him, at gunpoint, of $128.82. The accomplice escaped, but Harold was captured at the scene. He was convicted of third-degree burglary and entered Sing Sing Prison, as inmate No. 89183. Harold Giuliani was paroled after serving nearly sixteen months, and he remained a parolee for the first two years of his marriage. His conviction disqualified him for the draft, and he went to work with his brother-in-law Leo D'Avanzo, who had just bought the tavern on Kingston Avenue. D'Avanzo was a hoodlum with Mob connections, and his establishment was a front for various rackets. Harold, who tended bar, doubled as his enforcer.

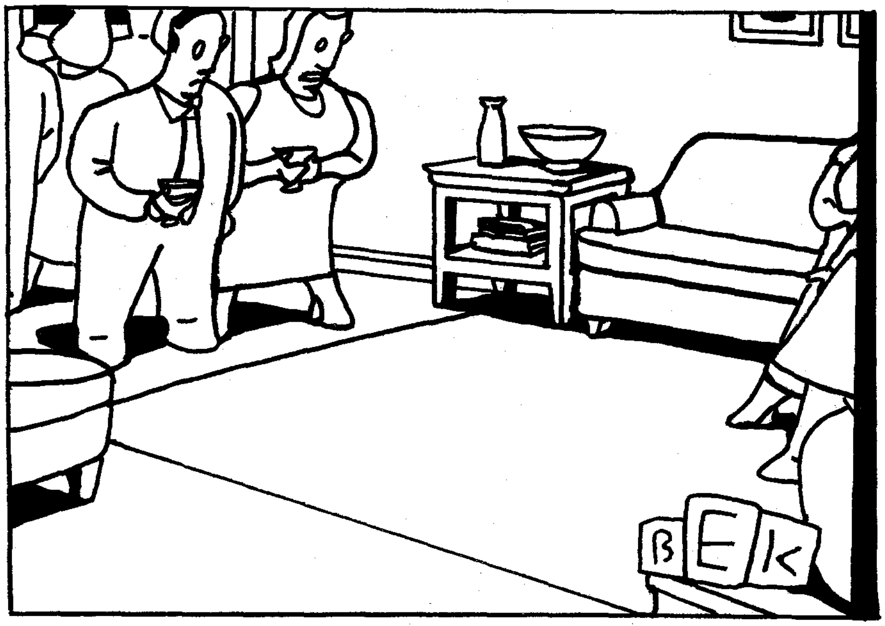
But, as Rudy reached school age, Harold began to consider making a break from Brooklyn and his criminal associations there. It was the early nineteen-fifties, an era when families by the thousand availed themselves of Robert Moses's vast complex of bridges, tunnels, and wide new highways to escape to the suburbs of Long Island and Westchester. In 1951, when Rudy was seven, Harold moved the family to the Long Island town of Garden City South, settling in a neighborhood of neat new houses, near a new Catholic grade school that had been built to accommodate the city exodus. Rudy returned to Brooklyn in high school as a scholarship day student at Bishop Loughlin Memorial High, commuting daily on the Long Island Rail Road.

One of Rudy's high-school teachers, Jack O'Leary, remembers being struck by Harold's interest in his son's discipline. Bishop Loughlin High was run by the De La Salle Christian Brothers, stern-looking men in black robes. One morning, O'Leary—who was known as Brother Kevin—went up to Rudy, who was gabbing with a classmate, and cuffed him on the ear. At the school's annual open house, Harold sought out O'Leary and thanked him for thumping his kid if he'd had it coming.

O'Leary became a family friend and had a lasting influence on Rudy. He encouraged the boy's interest in reading and nurtured his love of opera, helping Rudy form the school's first opera club. O'Leary sometimes visited the Giulianis at home, and Rudy would excitedly greet his teacher and rush him down to the basement, where he kept a phonograph and opera records. Harold, too, formed a personal bond with O'Leary, which eventually took on an aspect of the confessional. "I think it was because I was wearing the robe, or religious habit," O'Leary recalls. "Now, I wasn't a priest—a brother is not a priest. But Harold called me very, very frequently. And I think a big reason was because I was a brother, and he felt that he could confide in me, a religious figure." In his conversations with O'Leary, Harold spoke of his past, and of his troubles before he was married. "But he told me that that was behind him, and how sorry he was," O'Leary says.

Giuliani later said that his father's earlier life was kept secret from him, and that he had discerned only faint hints of it. O'Leary, too, says that Harold kept the truth from his son, and, as Giuliani moved into public life, it was useful not to know. Around the time Giuliani was entering politics, O'Leary says, he spoke to him and started to talk about some of what Harold had told him those long years ago. "He said, 'I don't want to hear that,'" O'Leary recalls. "He said, 'I don't know it, I don't want to hear it.' So I don't really think that Rudy knew much. He just knew his father as a man who cared for him, who was supportive of him, who helped him."

The details of Harold's criminal past came to light in 2000, when the *Village Voice* journalist Wayne Barrett published a critical biography of Giuliani. The revelations were plainly not welcomed by Giuliani, but he said at the time that it helped him understand his father and perhaps even something about himself.



*"Oh God, here they come—act green."*

Harold Giuliani had fostered in his son characteristics that perfectly suited what seemed to be Rudy Giuliani's natural calling: as a prosecutor. As a young lawyer in the U.S. Attorney's Office in New York, he was extremely ambitious, securing the best cases and prosecuting them with a startling ferocity. He slept with a Dictaphone near his bed, in case he woke up in the night with an insight that might give him an edge in court. While still in his twenties, he became a lead prosecutor in the corrupt-cops scandal that was depicted in the 1981 Sidney Lumet film "Prince of the City."

A more characteristic courtroom triumph, however, was the bribery prosecution, in 1974, of the Brooklyn Democratic congressman Bertram Podell. Giuliani seemed able to summon a concentrated contempt for any lawbreaker in sight, but he harbored a special disdain for corrupt public officials. He questioned Podell relentlessly on the witness stand for two days, before Podell—so rattled that he pushed one of the lenses out of his eyeglasses—broke down and pleaded guilty. Giuliani relished the moment. “It was sort of like a fantasy come true,” Giuliani told the journalist Connie Bruck a decade later. “The real dream that most trial lawyers have is that the person’s going to break down and confess, like on ‘Perry Mason’—and that is essentially what happened.”

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*“As far as I can tell, meditation is just worrying minus the content.”*

Giuliani worked at the Department of Justice in the closing days of the Ford Administration, and returned to Washington in 1981 as Ronald Reagan’s Associate Attorney General—the No. 3 position in the department. He began dating Donna Hanover, a Miami television newscaster, who soon moved to Washington. (Giuliani and his first wife, Regina, had been estranged for a number of years.) As Hanover explained to a journalist a few years later, the couple wanted to be “in the Washington-New York power axis. That way we could both get to the top of our careers.”

As one of Reagan’s advisers in the controversial dismissal of striking air-traffic-control workers, Giuliani saw early the value of high-stakes political confrontation. “The message that was sent to the American people was: this Ronald Reagan is someone not to be messed with,” Theodore Olson, who was the department’s legal counsel at the time, and who later served as George W. Bush’s Solicitor General, says. Giuliani was among those chosen to present the Administration’s side of the issue to the public, and he did not use the soft-sell approach. He told a radio interviewer, “What we’re dealing with here is a blatant violation of federal law. This isn’t a matter of discretion, or discussion.”

In 1983, Giuliani was appointed U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, where his ambitions and his talents fully merged. He used federal RICO laws to go after the Mob; then he focussed on Wall Street, prosecuting Ivan Boesky and Michael Milken, and sending Marc Rich on the lam. He was one of the first prosecutors to use the perp walk as a public-relations weapon against white-collar criminals, who traditionally had been allowed to present themselves before the court for arraignment. In February of 1987, he brought charges of insider trading against two Kidder, Peabody executives. As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial later put it:

> Giuliani had his agents burst into Kidder, Peabody, throw Richard Wigton up against the wall and handcuff him. He arranged to bust Timothy Tabor so late in the day that he had to spend a night in jail before he could post bond. Mr. Giuliani didn’t think Mr. Wigton was going to pull a knife or Mr. Tabor would flee the country. He lusted after the headlines, and hoped strong-arm tactics would coerce settlements. This is not the kind of prosecutorial zeal we need when the underlying law is far from clear.

The charges against Wigton and Tabor were subsequently dropped.

The first-ever racketeering case against a securities firm also took place in 1987, when Giuliani directed a showy raid on a small investment company called Princeton/Newport. Fifty federal marshals, armed and clad in bulletproof vests, swooped down on the firm’s offices, above an ice-cream store in Princeton, New Jersey, and seized several hundred boxes of documents and tapes—evidence, Giuliani’s team of prosecutors claimed, of the firm’s conspiracy to evade taxes. The five executives of the firm who were eventually indicted protested that the charges were really a squeeze by Giuliani. One of the defense lawyers claimed that the prosecutor’s interest was in Milken and his firm, and that he threatened, “Either you coöperate or we’re going to roll right over you.” The executives refused to help—they said they had nothing to give—and they were convicted. The convictions were overturned three years later by an appellate judge who cast doubt on the legitimacy of the racketeering prosecution. Meanwhile, Princeton/Newport had ceased operations. “The U.S. Attorney’s Office closed down a business without really doing its homework first,” one former prosecutor in Giuliani’s office says now.

“Rudy was a person for whom the world was only black-and-white,” another lawyer who worked in the U.S. Attorney’s Office told me. “There were no gray shadings. And when he went after Wall Street he made no distinction between people who were parking stocks and people who were dumping bodies.” Altercation was Giuliani’s natural medium, and a righteous anger, he once said, was one of the necessary tools of a successful politician.

Such traits might not make for a beloved officeholder, but they could have a certain utility in a political campaign.

In Giuliani's first try at electoral politics, in the 1989 mayoral race against the Democrat David Dinkins, his ambition was more in evidence than any coherent political philosophy. He'd seen himself as a John F. Kennedy Democrat since high school, and had voted—reluctantly, he later said—for George McGovern in 1972. He registered as an independent around the time he took a job in the Ford Justice Department and then, shortly before accepting a job in the Reagan Justice Department, as a Republican. He remained a nominal Republican of indistinct politics who, before his first run for mayor, hadn't wrestled seriously with even so basic a political issue as abortion. He ran against Dinkins as a crime-busting prosecutor, with the nostalgic promise of restoring New York to "the city of my parents and grandparents, of my relatives and friends."

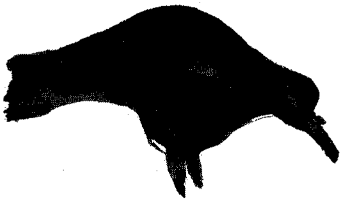
After losing to Dinkins, Giuliani set out to acquire a political philosophy, taking a full-immersion plunge into the world of think tanks and policy seminars. It was a time of reassessment of the New Deal and Great Society formulas and their liberal legacies. Giuliani absorbed the new thinking emerging from places like the conservative Manhattan Institute on issues ranging from welfare reform to an innovation in policing called the "broken windows" theory (which, when he became mayor, jump-started his anti-crime campaign).

Giuliani proved to be an eager wonk and a determined reformer, and in his next race, in 1993, he defeated Dinkins, but nothing he learned in those seminars informed his mayoralty so much as the advice he often quoted from his father: It's better to be respected than to be loved. That turn on Machiavelli (and "The Godfather") caught the spirit of Giuliani's governing style, which assumed enmity in untested allies and eschewed even the rough graces of New York politics. "This is a liberal town, and he was a moderate-to-conservative," Peter Powers, a lifelong friend of Giuliani's, who served as his first deputy mayor, explained. "This was a Democratic town, and we were Republicans. Add all that up, and we knew we were in enemy territory."

Giuliani's purpose wasn't merely to win over the city's political culture, or even to reshape it, but to overturn it. His crusades against crime and quality-of-life annoyances served his larger ambition, which was to root out the assumptions that had built New York into a welfare city-state always at the edge of crisis. When Giuliani took office, the city faced a $2.3-billion deficit and a shrinking tax base. One in six New Yorkers received welfare payments, and one in five was on the public payroll. Meanwhile, private-sector jobs were in sharp decline—an eight-per-cent drop since 1985.

Giuliani talked of personal responsibility and individual empowerment as he proposed ideas such as workfare and a sell-off of city hospitals. To many, it felt like a betrayal of the city's proud commitment to the needy. It did not help that Giuliani admitted no dissent from his vision, and that ruthless reprisal often seemed his first resort when anyone disagreed. His personality only sharpened the edges of his policies, leaving an impression, broadly felt, that was summed up by former Mayor Ed Koch in the title of a 1999 book: "Giuliani, Nasty Man." When a caller complained on Giuliani's radio show that her son—a robbery suspect—had been shot dead by the New York Police Department, he answered, "Maybe you should ask yourself some questions about the way he was brought up."

"Petty and vindictive" is the assessment of one of Giuliani's most reliable foils, Stephen DiBrienza, a former City Councilman from Brooklyn who in 1998 was on the receiving end of a memorable act of mayoral pique. DiBrienza was chairman of the Council's General Welfare Committee, which oversaw the city's social- and human-services programs, principal targets of Giuliani's reforms. One of the councilman's abiding concerns was the warehousing of homeless people in huge city shelters, some of which held as many as a thousand beds. In December, 1998, DiBrienza sponsored a bill to limit the number of beds at city facilities to two hundred, and to require that social services be made available at the shelters.



Giuliani vehemently opposed the measure, arguing that it would require the city to close down its seven largest shelters. The Council passed the legislation, and he vetoed it. He said that if he was forced to close the big shelters he would have to build new ones—and he would put them in the districts of the chief proponents of the bill. The Council overrode the veto by a substantial margin. The Mayor called DiBrienza a "limousine liberal" and a "hypocrite," and the administration announced plans to open a homeless shelter in a neighborhood in DiBrienza's district. An eviction notice was sent to a state-run psychiatric clinic housed in a city-owned building, with the explanation that a homeless shelter was coming in. In addition to the clinic, which tended to five hundred patients a week, the building contained a senior-citizen center and a nonprofit children's center.

"Think about it," DiBrienza says now. "Here's a guy who would go to that length, because I beat him on passing a law that requires smaller-bed shelters. Because we would not blink, he would throw kids, seniors, and the mentally ill out into the street. I mean, could I have written a better script to expose the fact of what he was?"

In the end, in the face of terrible publicity, the administration relented, and Giuliani dispatched a deputy, Joe Lhota, to broker a compromise. He himself offered no gesture of reconciliation. "I think he actually had no ability to do that," DiBrienza, who now practices law in Brooklyn and teaches at Baruch College, says. "He couldn't come to that point in the continuum where you extend your hand and someone shakes it, and maybe you don't even speak, but there's this recognition, whether it's a smile that says, 'O.K, you got me on this one, I'll get you next time,' or it's the silent 'O.K., you did what you had to do,' like two competitors at a sporting event. I don't think he got that."

Giuliani's obduracy was felt most keenly in New York's black community, where by 2000 his approval ratings had descended into the single digits. Giuliani had come into office by defeating the city's first black mayor, and even the revitalization of Harlem, achieved through policies encouraging local home ownership and business investment, did little to

## LOVE BOX

Because of the Paganini I lifted the lid
the minute I got back from Prague and kissed
the two ridiculous inlaid hearts that were
located so carefully and lacquered so well
they could have been painted on, and I would have said
one was me and one was you and you were
standing beside a column that propped the roof up
and you said, "Don't forget, I saved your life once,"
and I said, "I'll never forget," and there were walls
plated in bronze and dogs of gold and silver,
except the machine broke down, or what it did,
the music just ended, or just when you thought it did
there was another *ping;* and I got up
to put my white shirt on I wear to buy
my carrots in and I rewound the box
though it was June and there was blood on my fingers
from strawberries and I examined the tiny
pins reaching up from the comb and the block of wood
to see where music comes from and to learn
once and for all how feeling is converted,
though we were in a boat in Naples harbor—
I like that better—and we were floating and there was
more than an inch of water and the inlaid
hearts were shaking and the pins were going wild.

—*Gerald Stern*

enhance his image. That was partly because Giuliani refused to participate in street-theatre politics, such as having sitdowns with people like Al Sharpton. "Nothing's wrong with dialoguing," Giuliani told me. "But I came into a situation in which dialoguing substituted for action. Maybe it's different now. But I had to turn around a massive emphasis on style over substance. And the style, and the constantly dancing around about style, never got to the substance. And maybe if I came to it with all the things that are happening now I might have done it a little differently. The only way I could deal with it was to break myself of the political correctness, and having to spend hours and hours listening to useless, irrelevant conversation. Everybody has his strengths and weaknesses. That is not one of my strengths."

Avoidance of Sharpton may be a defensible posture, but Giuliani seemed to have concluded early on that he would never overcome the black community's antipathy, and he invested little personal capital in the effort. The gulf widened because of aggressive new tactics used by the N.Y.P.D., such as a new emphasis on stop-and-frisk searches, and Giuliani's few allies in the black community found it increasingly difficult to defend him. When controversial police shootings stirred racial unrest, he seemed reflexively eager to leap to the defense of the cops. After an unarmed black security guard, Patrick Dorismond, was shot and killed by undercover narcotics officers, in March of 2000, Giuliani sanctioned the release of Dorismond's juvenile arrest record and suggested that Dorismond wasn't "an altar boy." (Dorismond actually had been an altar boy, and had attended Giuliani's old high school, Bishop Loughlin.) When Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, was arrested and then brutalized by a group of cops, in 1997, he claimed that one of the attackers had menacingly declared, "This is Giuliani time!" Afterward, Louima, who won the largest-ever police-brutality settlement against the city ($8.75 million), said that he had fabricated that part of the story—but its resonance lingered.

Some black allies of Giuliani's, including Richard Parsons, the Time Warner chairman, attributed his political failure among minorities to his inability to relate to the world outside his own experience. During most of his professional life, Giuliani has situated himself at the center of a tight-knit group of associates, almost all of them white and male, whose foremost attribute is devotion to him. When he became the U.S. Attorney in New York, some in the office noticed that more lawyers were being hired from—as one of them complained at the time—"places like Catholic University." A former prosecutor in the office told me, "Rudy surrounded himself with a very small group of people. The 'Shrewdies,' some called them—because they all said yes to Rudy. I've always thought that he had a surprisingly small inner circle—and they were not always the best and the brightest."

The same complaint followed Giuliani into politics, where he sometimes seemed to be deliberating inside an echo chamber. Loyalty is the virtue that he most prizes, and its absence in an aide is the surest route to exile. That was the fate of his first police commissioner, William Bratton, whose innovations in police strategies made Giuliani's stunning reductions in crime possible. Bratton seemed to have the requisite attributes for membership in the Giuliani blessed circle—his background was working-class Catholic, and he shared Giuliani's passion for statistics and formulas—but he was uninterested in becoming the Mayor's pal. Bratton was a second sun in the New York cosmos, wearing expensive suits, socializing with his own circle of friends, and cultivating the press and the crowd at Elaine's. He enjoyed the spotlight, and eventually paid a price for it. Two months after he made the cover of *Time*, he was gone as commissioner.

One of Bratton's successors was Bernard Kerik, a talented cop with street cunning, who entered Giuliani's sphere as his bodyguard in the 1993 campaign. Kerik, then a detective, relished his place in the circle, and was eventually promoted to commissioner of the city's Department of Corrections, where he was credited with achieving a dramatic reduction in violence in city jails. Giuliani named him police commissioner in the summer of 2000, with a mandate to further reduce the city's crime rate—which Kerik did. In 2002, Kerik followed Giuliani into the private sector, as a partner in Giuliani's firm, where he developed contacts that made him rich. On Giuliani's recommendation, President Bush in 2004 nominated Kerik as director of Homeland Security, but Kerik had to withdraw his name after it was learned that he had paid his children's nanny off the books. Kerik was further disgraced when he pleaded guilty, in June of 2006, to charges that, as corrections commissioner, he had accepted more than a hundred thousand dollars in gifts from a New Jersey construction firm, and had violated the city's administrative code by failing to report a personal loan. He remains under investigation on various other charges, including tax evasion. He now watches the Presidential campaign from a distance, pained that he has become a liability for Giuliani, but still a faithful believer.

After one of the Republican debates this June, I received an e-mail from Kerik, who was in Jordan coördinating a security project for King Abdullah II. "Watching the debate from the Middle East, Rudy's the only one to talk about a real program of accountability in D.C.," Kerik wrote. "In looking at the other candidates, no one else has ever done it. Rudy's got to use his examples more."

When I asked Giuliani recently what sort of person he would put in the position of director of Homeland Security if he is elected, he laughed and said, "I guess you need a Bernie Kerik without the background problems that Bernie Kerik had."

It became clear at the start of Giuliani's political career that his courtroom talents—the ability to break a witness on the stand, for example—were not especially useful in the task of charming voters. In Giuliani's delivery style, there was no trace of the natural politician. Apart from mechanical liabilities—including a lateral lisp that produces a slushy "s" sound—Giuliani was impaired by a native harshness that proved resistant to the remedies of his political advisers. In both runs against Dinkins, Giuliani's campaign enlisted the candidate's wife, Donna Hanover, in an effort to humanize her husband through television ads. (These ads are now YouTube staples.) Old friends and trusted advisers, such as Peter Powers, despaired of ever coaxing a softer Giuliani to the fore. Then, about midway through his first term, Giuliani turned himself over to a man named Elliot Cuker, who, in short order, had him squeezing into a dress.

*"Have it your way—I'm happier than you are."*

In Giuliani's circle, Cuker functioned variously as the Mayor's drama coach, his personal adviser, and his best friend. Born near Tashkent, Cuker had worked as an actor before establishing a successful business selling classic automobiles. During a stint in private law practice in the nineteen-seventies, Giuliani represented Cuker in a tax case, and the two men established a bond that both amused and puzzled Giuliani's political associates. Cuker, unrestrained by deference, was credited by Giuliani with crafting a speaking style for him—a conversational persuasiveness—that became a political strength (and a source of vast wealth on the lecture circuit). "He was a dreadful speaker," Cuker recalls of the early public Giuliani. "He was stiff, and his forehead would get drenched, with sweat running down both sides of the temples. He was extraordinarily uncomfortable speaking."

Giuliani was a pliant student, making himself available to Cuker at all hours. "I'm a member of the Actors Studio," Cuker told me, "and I had the key to the Actors Studio, and when everybody left I would take him there sometimes, like at ten o'clock at night, and work with him. But we worked everyplace." Cuker's aim was to force Giuliani away from his notes and toward spontaneity. "The fact is, I got close enough to him as a friend, at the time, that he had such trust in what I'm doing with him, that he let himself truly open up to me in a way that he really hadn't done with anybody," Cuker said. "And he's become very spontaneous, as you can see. Very spontaneous."

By the time Giuliani gave his third state-of-the-city address, in 1996, he left his notes on the lectern and, microphone in hand, walked about the stage, "talking" his speech. "Just talk to the people," Cuker had advised. "Connect to the people." Giuliani gave Cuker a parking pass at Gracie Mansion, and put him in charge of the annual Inner Circle political dinners—the municipal equivalent of the Washington Gridiron Club dinner, in which politicians and members of the press kid each other in skits and songs. Cuker saw the Inner Circle performances as another means of shaping the Mayor's image. "I would rewrite a Broadway show to put Rudy into the show to help with what he needed at the time, politically, for his image," Cuker recalled. "For example, when he was throwing Arafat out of Lincoln Center, people saw him as being very angry." In 1995, during a United Nations celebration, Giuliani called Arafat a "murderer" and had him removed from a concert at Avery Fisher Hall. Cuker continued, "What I did was I chose the show 'Grease,' and I rewrote the show. And I put him on a motorcycle, and I showed him as a Hells Angel rebel back in school, and how it all started. So every show I did had a purpose."

It was Cuker who was responsible for Giuliani's turns in drag, which have also become a YouTube staple. "I am the one who convinced him that it would be a great idea to put him in a dress, soften him up, and help him get the gay vote," Cuker says. "And, ultimately, it was his biggest bonus, because he got the gay vote—and the conservatives, who couldn't believe that he had the balls to do something like that. It was a home run for him, and he got national attention. It showed that he had a sense of humor."

Cuker accompanied Giuliani to the golf course and to Yankee Stadium, and talked with him on the phone a half-dozen times a day. When Cuker sensed that the Mayor needed a retreat, he opened a cigar bar—Cooper Classic Cars and Cigars, on West Fifty-eighth Street—which became Giuliani's Elaine's. "We were almost like brothers," Cuker says now. "We were extremely close. He had a very strong trust in me, and he knew that I cared about him. And he knew that, whatever I did, I always tried to be there for him, and to help him with that other part of himself."

It was that other part of Giuliani—uninhibited and more spontaneous than perhaps even Cuker might have imagined possible—that had full rein during the strange spring of 2000, when Giuliani's private dramas became public spectacle. Giuliani was given a diagnosis of prostate cancer—the disease that killed his father—prompting his withdrawal from the U.S. Senate race against Hillary Clinton, a campaign to which he had never seemed wholly committed anyway. But the Mayor's illness and his political plans were relegated to a subplot in the larger story—the breakup of his marriage to Donna Hanover.

What had seemed a conventional political marriage during Giuliani's first two campaigns had become a standoff between two camps sharing the Gracie Mansion roof. Within three years of his election, Giuliani had excited speculation of an affair by spending a lot of time with a young press aide, Cristyne Lategano. (Both have consistently denied that the relationship was sexual.) For her part, Hanover made it clear that she was not her husband's appendage ("I have my own life, you know," she told a dinner guest who spoke at length of his admiration for Giuliani). The First Lady had her own entourage, which included a press officer, whose job was to put a Hanover spin on things. By the time of Giuliani's reëlection bid, in 1997, she had dropped her husband's name and declined to attend public events with him. "She stopped attending even private functions with him," a Giuliani insider recalls. When the First Couple attended events for their children, Caroline and Andrew, they arrived and departed separately.

In April, 2000, Hanover accepted a role in Eve Ensler's feminist play "The Vagina Monologues." It seemed a particularly well-struck blow, not only because of the play's sexually charged content but also because Ensler, a friend of Hillary Clinton's, was an outspoken critic of Giuliani's policies. When her husband announced that he had cancer, however, Hanover postponed her engagement. The evening after announcing the diagnosis, Giuliani was spotted by reporters sharing a romantic dinner with a woman he described as "a very good friend"—a divorced former nurse named Judith Nathan. Giuliani (who once declared Yankee Stadium the most romantic spot in New York) had been seeing Nathan regularly, and publicly, for several months. During one memorable week in early May, the Giulianis engaged in a series of duelling press appearances, with Hanover (a Catholic) declaring from the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral that her marriage was "very precious" to her, and Giuliani countering a few days later by telling reporters that, sadly ("I feel terrible"), he planned a formal separation from his wife. Within hours, Hanover explained that she had been pushed out of her husband's life long before, by his relationship with Lategano. The bizarre sequence culminated with Giuliani declaring himself out of the Senate race while also saying that he was a lucky man, because "I have people that love me and I love them and they care for me and I care for them."

There remained a divorce proceeding, which occasioned the revelation by Giuliani's lawyer that the Mayor had been rendered temporarily impotent by his cancer treatment. Hanover, meanwhile, refused to leave Gracie Mansion or relinquish her "official" duties as First Lady, which prompted an attempt on the Mayor's part to shut down her operation there. There were court battles over the question of whether Judith Nathan would be allowed into the official residence. Finally, Giuliani moved out of Gracie Mansion himself and into the home of two gay friends. In all this, Nathan was cast in the role of grasping home-wrecker, but the Giuliani insider told me, "There was no doubt that she loved him. She took care of him before 9/11, when he had cancer, and after 9/11 she took care of him. She took care of his food, she made sure he got his sleep. And, look, Rudy Giuliani back then was not liked, he was not running for President. He didn't have a dime. You know, he was broke." But it didn't really matter. The circumstances in which Nathan entered Giuliani's public life, and the resulting tensions between Giuliani and his children, seemed to symbolize what, in another context, an internal 1993 Giuliani campaign document warned was the "weirdness factor" in his personal life.

Giuliani may have been "broke" when he left office, in January, 2002, but it was clear that the September 11th attacks and their aftermath had raised his value in the marketplace, and that he would be a wealthy man before the year was out. Talk Miramax Books had signed him to a three-million-dollar book deal months before the attacks, based on the tumults of his mayoralty; now that he was "America's Mayor," his memoir, "Leadership," was all but guaranteed best-seller status upon publication, in the autumn of 2002. Giuliani left office on Tuesday, January 1st. Two days later, he addressed General Electric executives in Boca Raton, Florida. Last year, he earned more than eight million dollars on the lecture circuit.

Giuliani had laid the groundwork for his grandest venture, the consulting firm

Giuliani Partners, before leaving office. His idea was essentially to lift his inner circle from City Hall, as nearly intact as possible, and set it down in the private sector, hanging an "Open for Business" sign on the door. Among those who eventually joined him were, in addition to Kerik, his fire chief, Tom Von Essen; his corporation counsel, Michael Hess; his chief of staff, Anthony Carbonetti; and his chief counsel, Denny Young. "We're going to re-create in the private sector the very close relationship and efficiency and effectiveness that we've had in government," Giuliani said.

It was as if he were now offering himself up as Mayor of the World—and the world appeared ready to do business with him. Governments from the Middle East to Mexico wanted Giuliani's advice on security issues, and businessmen wanted an association with the Giuliani leadership cachet. Giuliani formed an alliance with Ernst & Young, giving his new firm, which had an investment-banking arm, instant entrée into the finance establishment. Merrill Lynch and Entergy became Giuliani clients, as did Nextel. Some of the business that came through the doors at Giuliani Partners bore the odor of rank opportunism. The main business of a company called Command Security Corporation, based in upstate New York, was hiring out security guards, and an association with Rudy Giuliani offered an obvious chance to heighten its profile and trade on his name. The challenge was to persuade Giuliani Partners to associate itself with a small-time rent-a-cop company. Command's chairman, Bruce Galloway, managed to secure a one-year contract through a third party, Richard Chwatt, of Jericho State Capital, in Boca Raton. Galloway told *Forbes* that Chwatt was willing to arrange the introduction because "Richard Chwatt's wife is very, very dear friends with Judith Nathan, and that's how we got the relationship." (Giuliani Partners denied that the women had any influence on the deal.) Giuliani Partners received fees of more than two million dollars, and, according to S.E.C. filings, Jericho State Capital was paid a ninety-thousand-dollar fee, plus stock warrants, for making the introduction.

Shortly after Bernard Kerik was obliged to withdraw from consideration as director of Homeland Security, he left Giuliani Partners, where he had run Giuliani's security division. He was replaced by Pasquale D'Amuro, who had led the F.B.I.'s investigation into the September 11th attacks, and who became the bureau's No. 3 official before retiring. At the F.B.I., D'Amuro had worked closely with Ali Soufan, an Arabic-speaking Lebanese-American who had been the lead investigator into the October, 2000, suicide bombing of the U.S.S. Cole. Soufan had concluded that a more spectacular Al Qaeda operation was under way and came very close to uncovering the September 11th plot before the attacks occurred. (The story of his efforts, and how they were hindered by the C.I.A., was recounted by Lawrence Wright in this magazine.)

Soufan, upon hearing that D'Amuro was leaving the F.B.I. for Giuliani Partners, got in touch with him. "He said, 'Take me with you,' " D'Amuro recalls. Soufan left the F.B.I. and joined Giuliani. He has spent much of his time lately in a Persian Gulf country that is a Giuliani client. The firm has helped the country with training, and with a revamping of its security infrastructure. The locale is an ideal listening post for someone whose expertise is unravelling the tangle of international terror.

On the campaign trail, Giuliani speaks often of his own expertise on terrorism, and he occasionally hints that he has an especially valuable source on the subject. When I asked Giuliani about Soufan, he confirmed his posting in the Persian Gulf, and praised him as "one of the world-class experts on terrorism." In the event of a Giuliani Administration, he added, "maybe I'd want to steal him away."

When Giuliani began his Presidential run, the problems were obvious. For one thing, he had to establish the new Mrs. Giuliani as the essential political spouse. When the Giulianis appeared on television with Barbara Walters, Giuliani held his wife's hand, cooed at her, called her "baby," and declared that he so admired her qualities that he would allow her to sit in on Cabinet meetings. The appearance backfired, and came amid a series of revelations about Nathan's past (including the fact that she had concealed her first marriage) and exposés about her overreaching in her role as unofficial campaign adviser. By mid-spring, she had retreated from the campaign trail.

More important, Giuliani had to address the right's objections to his moderation on issues like gun control and abortion. In the case of abortion, he calculated that, since he could hardly renounce his pro-choice identity, he could at least neutralize it, and possibly even gain some measure of advantage, by straightforwardly owning up to it. "I hate abortion," he said repeatedly, while asserting that he also had to respect a woman's right to obtain one. This approach was not particularly persuasive to the right, and after his "It would be O.K." answer at the Reagan Library he came to be depicted in the press as the Roe v. Wade candidate. He found himself unable to change the subject. At the Heritage Foundation, in Washington, in May, he gave what was meant to be a major policy address. On national security, he called for a bigger army and victory in Iraq, and, domestically, he pledged to cut Washington spending across the board. He did not mention abortion. The next morning, the *Times* story about his Heritage appearance bore the headline "ABORTION RISES ANEW FOR GIULIANI," and dwelled on the fact that in the nineteen-nineties Giuliani and his former wife Donna Hanover had donated nine hundred dollars to Planned Parenthood.

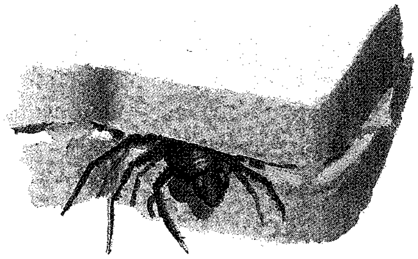
Fred Siegel, a history professor at Cooper Union who wrote a book about Giuliani in 2005, and who served as an unpaid adviser when Giuliani was shaping his program of reform as a candidate for mayor, was surprised by Giuliani's apparent unreadiness for the Presidential run. Giuliani had always been obsessively overprepared, and now Siegel could only surmise that in the years since the World Trade Center bombings Giuliani had become too distant from the fray. "I think that the abortion issue is the moment that he walked out of the bubble of adulation," Siegel says. "He'd been living inside that bubble, and I think this was the moment he realized he could no longer take comfort in it."

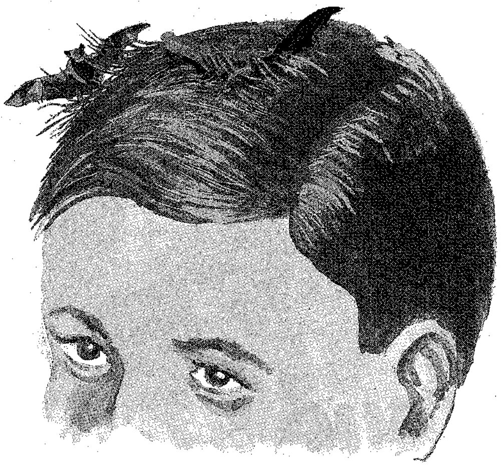
What Giuliani needed, perhaps, was a fight, and on May 15th he got one. The occasion was another Republican debate, held on the University of South Carolina campus, in Columbia. The pressure, the Washington *Post* noted, was all on the front-runner Giuliani "and his continuing effort to extricate himself

SKETCHBOOK BY BRUCE McCALL

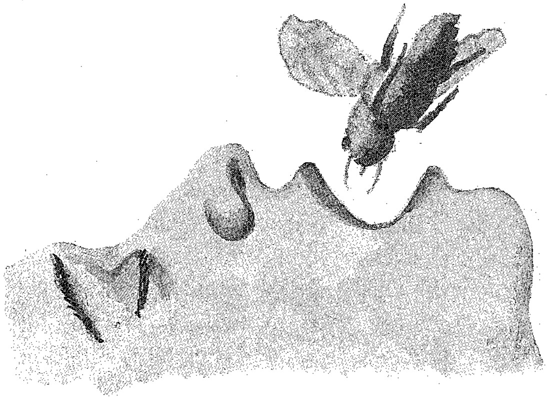
# CAMPER BUG ALERT

**THE GIANT SANDWICH SPIDER**, hatched deep within the tiny air pockets in soft white bread, can wait weeks and even months before suddenly emerging to "evacuate" on bologna or any other sandwich filling. It's the fastest-moving arachnid known, with a slime-slicked body that makes it even harder to catch.

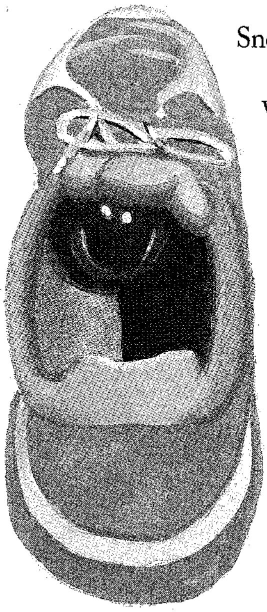




Clusters of **NORTH KOREAN HAIR BATS** circle above summer-camp cabins, waiting to swoop down and tunnel into the hair of anyone foolish enough to go outside at night. Camp nurses often have to summon the local fire department to pry these tiny iron-jawed terrors from their mewling victims' scalps.

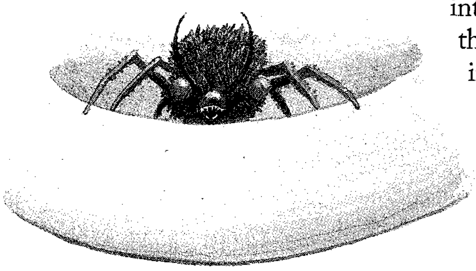


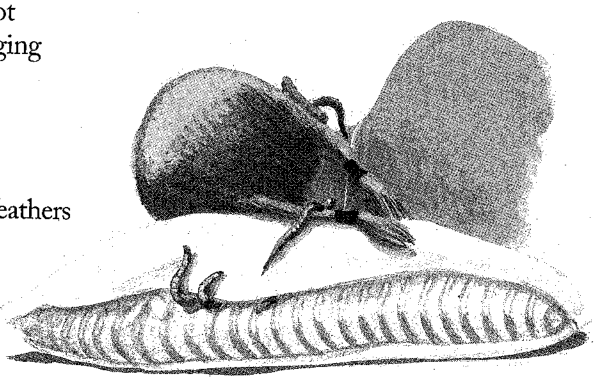
Lured by the sound of human snoring, the nocturnal **DIVING FURRY FUZZ MOTH** buzzes in through cabin windows and heads straight for the nearest oral cavity, where it will lay up to two million eggs before it does its frantic "dance of death" and disappears forever into its host's esophagus.



Sneakers or hiking boots left under your bunk will quickly attract the **RED-EYED HYENA SPIDER**, which lives between cabin floorboards, waiting to feast on the stale sweat caked in the toe area of campers' footwear. Slip your foot into your sneaker the next morning only if a medical doctor is in attendance.

**THE HORNED TOILET BEETLE** lurks deep down in bathroom plumbing and is drawn by the heat of summer to migrate upward into the toilet bowl, where the use of the seat drives it instantaneously into a blind frenzy of biting, accompanied by a spray of foul-smelling hot grease from its bulging "stink sacs."





The sinister **HAIRY PILLOW WORM** can nest in the feathers in camp pillows for years before the warmth of a human head awakens an instinct to chew its way out and begin its silent slither in search of life-giving earwax. It never needs to go far!

from a controversy over his position on abortion." Circumstances that day were inauspicious. The Reverend Jerry Falwell had just died, an event promising a line of questioning about politics and faith, which could not help Giuliani. But in production meetings that day the staff at Fox News, which was broadcasting the debate, decided against inviting comments on Falwell.

Giuliani's more important break came from Ron Paul, the self-described "constitutionalist" whose unconventional campaign promises to "reinstate the Constitution and restore the Republic." Paul, a seventy-one-year-old medical doctor and a Texas congressman, is the candidate of the seriously disaffected, who admire his casting of the Iraq war (which he voted against) as a consequence of an arrogant American empire. Paul's is not a line of reasoning that is usually accorded lengthy consideration among mainstream Republicans, but Paul said something that night that prompted a follow-up question from the panelist Wendell Goler, a Fox White House correspondent. "They attack us because we've been over there," Paul said. "We've been bombing Iraq for ten years."

Goler asked, "Are you suggesting we invited the 9/11 attacks, sir?"

"I'm suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it. And they are delighted that we're over there, because Osama bin Laden has said, 'I am glad you're over on our sand because we can target you so much easier.' They have already now since that time killed thirty-four hundred of our men, and I don't think it was necessary."

Giuliani interrupted. "Wendell, may I make a comment on that? That's really an extraordinary statement. As someone who lived through the attack of September 11th—that we invited the attack because we were attacking Iraq. I don't think I've ever heard that before and I've heard some pretty absurd explanations for September 11th."

The remark provoked sustained applause from the audience, and Giuliani took the cue. His hands on the lectern, his left thumb twitching, he fixed Paul in a death stare, and said, "I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us he didn't really mean that."

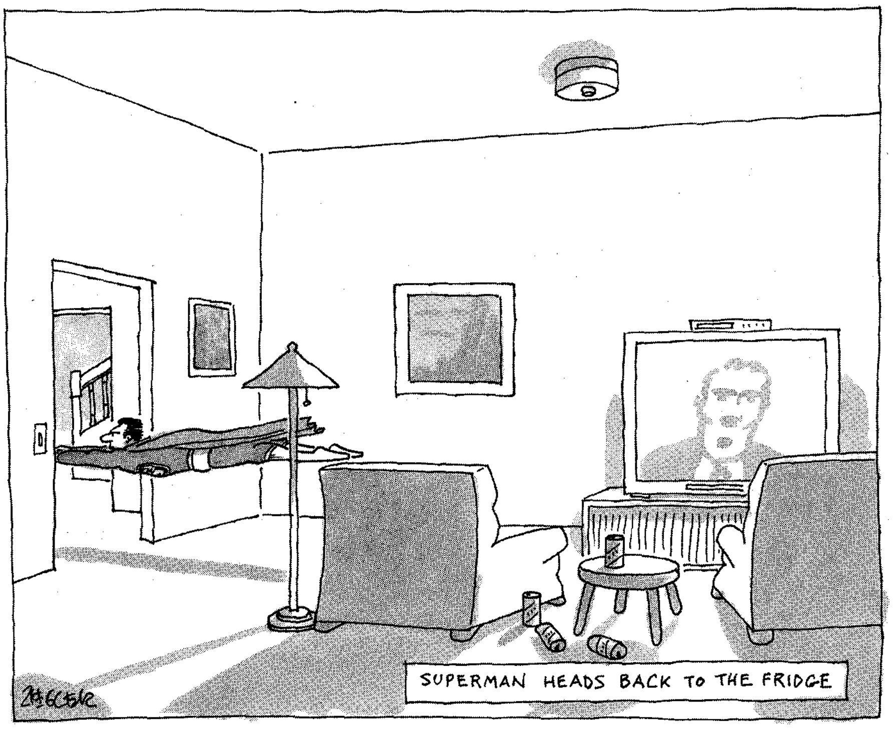
After the debate, Giuliani worked the spin room, and then addressed a crowd of supporters who had watched the event on TV in a nearby ballroom. Focussing on the differences between him and the Democrats, he assailed Hillary Clinton, criticizing her as a redistributionist and an enemy of the free market. "Now, these are scary thoughts, they really are—that she, or some Democrat, can take your money and they're going to use it for the common good," he said.

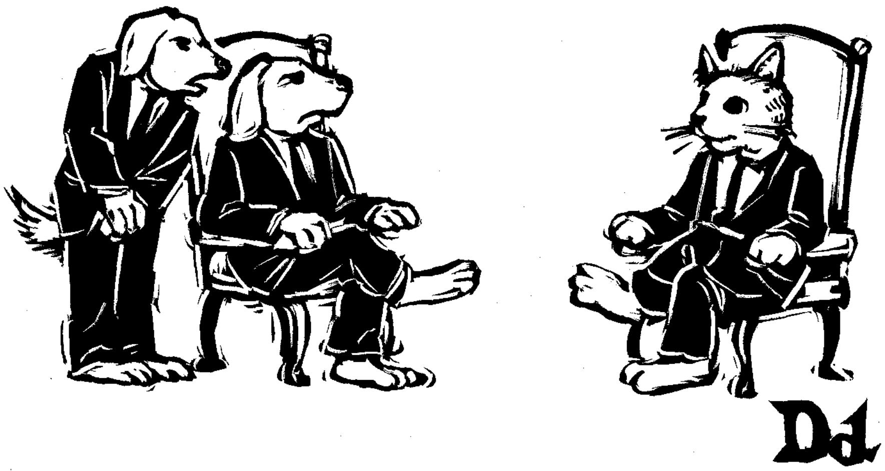
Campaigning against Clinton eight months before the first primary serves at least two purposes for Giuliani. It provides an implicit preview of the general election and it entails the joy of combat. "We're going to have a big fight against the Democrats," he promised his partisans. "A big, big fight. The media, the liberal media, has already installed them. And if you read the New York *Times*, and you listen to CNN, I mean we shouldn't even be running. But you know something? We're going to give 'em a big surprise."

Such events, little noticed by the broad voting public, can send important signals to political activists. The signal from Giuliani was that he had found his old form. He began to taunt Democrats for faintheartedness in what he called "the terrorists' war against us"—extending, he charged, to an unwillingness to even call the enemy by its name: Islamic terrorism. "Did they think it wouldn't be politically correct?" he said. "Did they think it would be insulting? When you say 'Islamic terrorists,' the only people you're insulting are … Islamic terrorists. And, really, we don't care if we insult them."

For Giuliani, focussing on the differences between him and the Democrats has also served to distract attention from the differences between himself and the Republican base. His view of abortion as a moral wrong but an individual right is unlikely to persuade the pro-life wing of the Party that he would not appoint another David Souter to the Supreme Court. Last month, Giuliani sent a message to the Republican base that, in the cipher of abortion politics, was meant to say, Trust me. Guided by his old friend Ted Olson, who is now in private law practice, Giuliani assembled a Justice Advisory Committee that included Steven Calabresi, one of the founders of the Federalist Society, and Miguel Estrada, whose nomination to the federal bench in 2001 was filibustered by Democrats for more than two years, before he finally withdrew.

Giuliani came to his pro-choice position in 1989, as a candidate for mayor of a city that presumes an abortion-rights position in its politicians. The switch is easy enough to comprehend. More perplexing is why Giuliani continues to cast abortion as "morally wrong." It suggests a religious ambivalence,


SUPERMAN HEADS BACK TO THE FRIDGE



"You'll have to phrase it another way. They have no word for 'fetch.'"

which he projects whenever the subject of his faith arises—and which is not a useful feature for a Republican. He counts himself a Catholic, and reminds voters that he once wanted to be a priest, but he is the only Republican candidate who declined to answer an Associated Press survey about church attendance. At a campaign stop on Ash Wednesday, he told a questioner that he intended to get to church that day—"Can't miss Ash Wednesday"—but his campaign wouldn't say whether or not he went.

Giuliani is part of the generation of American Catholics that was formed by the "old" Church—tradition-bound and rule-laden—but that came of age in the era of the Second Vatican Council, which overturned many of the old ways. As a boy, Giuliani had a crucifix in his room and prayed to St. Francis. At school, he memorized the Baltimore catechism (which included such instruction as "What is actual sin? Actual sin is any willful thought, desire, word, action, or omission contrary to the law of God"). By the time he graduated from college, though—he went to Manhattan College, another Christian Brothers school—Giuliani had been thoroughly exposed to the new views then sweeping through the seminaries and the theology departments of Catholic colleges and, eventually, the broader Church. Many Catholics—like Giuliani—felt the changes of Vatican II as a liberation, and began to rely less on Church teaching than on their individual consciences in deciding moral issues.

"The way to understand me as a Catholic is, it's my religion," Giuliani told me. "I have learned a lot from it. I am informed by it. But I am not directed by it."

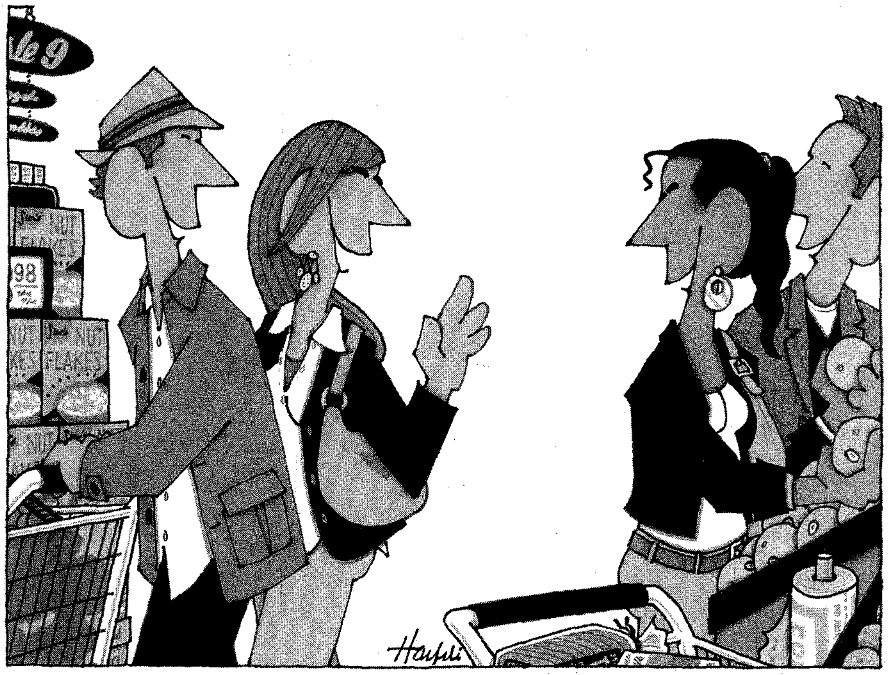
Pope John Paul II deplored such thinking, and criticized those he called "smorgasbord Catholics" for picking and choosing which tenets of the Church they wished to follow. This strain in the Church acquired a political dimension in 2004, when several American bishops declared that a Catholic politician who condoned abortion—which was to say, John Kerry—should be denied Holy Communion. Before Giuliani's candidacy, this had been a problem only for Democrats, but vocal Catholics have made it clear that Giuliani will not be spared the Kerry treatment. Giuliani can avoid the public embarrassment of being denied Communion by skipping church, but he cannot stop a public attack from Catholic leaders. Bishop Thomas J. Tobin, of Providence, for example, had this to say about Giuliani's position that abortion is morally wrong but an individual right: "Why is it that when I hear someone explaining this position, I think of the sad figure of Pontius Pilate in the Gospels, who personally found no guilt in Jesus, but, for fear of the crowd, washed his hands of the whole affair and handed Jesus over to be crucified? I can just hear Pilate saying, 'You know, I'm personally opposed to crucifixion, but I don't want to impose my belief on others.'"

"They have every right to tell me anything they want," Giuliani said to me. "But then I have every right to believe anything I want. And, ultimately, that sort of expresses both my political faith and my religious faith. They have a right to instruct me. And then, having my own conscience, and my own mind, and being my own individual person, I have a right to determine whether I agree with that or I don't agree with it. Now, there are some people that look at religion differently. That's the way I look at it. It's a way that helps me understand morality better. It helps me understand God better. And ultimately it's my relationship with God, my relationship with Jesus, that's the important one. And I've got to figure it out. And if they help me they do. And if I don't agree with it then I have to go with my own conscience."

George W. Bush became President in part because many Catholic swing voters (formerly traditional Democrats) turned his way. If Giuliani somehow survives skepticism in the Republican base and wins the Party's nomination, the abortion issue could be his undoing in the general election.

"If he is the nominee, the first thing that's going to happen is you're going to have a certain group of people just drop out of politics for the cycle," Deal Hudson, the executive director of the Morley Institute for Church and Culture, in Washington, says. Hudson, who was instrumental in George W. Bush's courtship of Catholic voters in 2000 and 2004, believes that a Giuliani nomination would have dire long-term consequences for Republicans. "The most important effect," he says, "is that all those Catholics who have voted Republican on and off since Reagan, and especially those who voted for Bush both times, on the assumption, the unwilling recognition, that the Republican Party had become the party that protected life and the traditional faith, they will be lost for the unforeseeable future to the Republican Party. That's a lot of people. In my opinion, that amounts to giving away the voting group that has made the difference in the last two Presidential elections."

Francis Maier, who serves as a lay adviser to Denver's Archbishop Charles Chaput and helped guide the 2004 Catholic effort to deny Communion to John Kerry, was blunter. "Giuliani's attitude toward abortion is not right," he said. "And he's just not a nice man. He's a



*"You're on our 'to do' list."*

great example of a very good politician who's an unpleasant man." As far as denying Communion, Maier said that in Giuliani's case, unlike Kerry's, he doubted whether the issue would ever come up. "The difference here is that Kerry very specifically claimed to be Catholic, and practiced publicly. He did it in a way that was sort of this uniquely personal Catholicism. But Giuliani—I mean, he's publicly divorced, he's fighting with his ex-wife, he doesn't get along with his children, and so there really isn't a whole lot of ambiguity about the guy, you know?" Maier went on, "His whole story—with the wife and the mistress—it's just extraordinary. It's astounding that he got away with this, but he did. But, I mean, New York is New York, and he delivered the goods, so everybody cut him some slack."

So there's no issue unless Giuliani begins portraying himself as a serious Catholic? I asked.

"Oh, yeah. That would be interesting. I hope he tries it," Maier said.

Potentially more dangerous for Giuliani is the gun issue. In two of the early primary states, New Hampshire and South Carolina, even many Democrats oppose gun control, and Giuliani may be seen as a big-city gun grabber. He was a visible ally of Bill Clinton's during the Brady-bill wars in the nineteen-nineties, and has been something close to an absolutist on every gun-control issue he has ever confronted, going back to his time in the Reagan Justice Department (when he opposed Edwin Meese, the White House counsel, on the issue). It is the subject on which he becomes most contorted in trying to square his past positions with his current political imperatives.

As mayor, Giuliani pressed for federal legislation banning military-type semiautomatic weapons ("assault weapons"), and requiring that anyone wishing to carry a handgun be licensed. As a Presidential candidate, Giuliani portrays his gun-control advocacy as an anti-crime tool, particular to New York, and says that gun regulation is best left to the states. "I was extremely aggressive in enforcing New York gun laws, and all the gun laws I could think of, to the point of reducing crime in New York," he told me one afternoon in Baltimore this spring. (His campaign boasts that while he was mayor the murder rate dropped by sixty-seven per cent, rape by forty-six per cent, and robbery by sixty-seven per cent.)

Yet Giuliani's past gun-control positions suggested the passion of heartfelt advocacy. He not only enforced existing laws; he lobbied for new regulations, and was the first Republican mayor to join other cities in taking gun manufacturers to court in a strategy that mimicked the anti-tobacco lawsuits meant to take down the big tobacco companies. When President Clinton signed the crime bill banning assault weapons, in 1994, Giuliani attended the White House ceremony and sat in the front row. That ban has since expired, and I asked Giuliani if he would support its renewal. "I think assault weapons would fall into the category of things that you could reasonably look at to prohibit," he said. "But I'd really prefer to see that done on a state-by-state basis."

We were talking about guns that day because, while I was waiting for him to arrive for our meeting, I happened to receive a call on my cell phone from a former lobbyist for the gun industry. He told me that, to his surprise, Giuliani had finished first in a poll of gun owners' Presidential preferences. I mentioned this to Giuliani. "I guess what maybe they understand," he said of the gun owners, "is that I was very aggressive in enforcing every law."

Giuliani's renown as a crime buster in New York has helped him finesse his positions on other politically sensitive issues as well, even one on which—like the gun issue—he had an unambiguous record: immigration. Giuliani has always been an immigration softie, owing perhaps to the romantic pull of his family's immigration story. Harold Giuliani's family came to America from the hillside town of Montecatini, near Florence, and Helen's from Naples. The travails of the first arrivals and the triumph of assimilation, the narrative of his own bloodlines, fundamentally shaped Giuliani's thinking on immigrants. As the issue of illegal immigration was taken up by conservatives with increasing ardency, Giuliani was reminded of the nativist Know-Nothing movement of the nineteenth century, whose adherents sought to repel the tide of mostly Catholic European immigration. "Italians never would have gotten here if they had succeeded," he told a gathering in New Hampshire one evening. "I'd be running for mayor of Montecatini, maybe. Or maybe I'd be a police officer in Naples. But I wouldn't be here."

Hard-liners on illegal immigration

criticized Giuliani for his policies in New York, where he instructed city employees—including cops—not to coöperate with federal I.N.S. agents looking for illegal aliens. Today, Giuliani says that the I.N.S. was wasting resources by chasing after "cooks and gardeners," and that he was worried that illegal immigrants would stop coöperating with police during criminal investigations if they were afraid of being deported, but his heart is plainly on the side of those who have come to this country illegally in order to work, or to build new lives for their families, and he intuitively sympathizes with any immigration plan that would ultimately find such people a place in society.

His own immigration-policy plans, framed as a national-security issue, were not different in any meaningful way from the compromise bill that consumed Congress this spring, except that he wanted every illegal resident to come forward for a tamper-proof identity card before getting in line for citizenship. It was, in essence, another form of amnesty, with a few extra requirements—besides getting their I.D.s, the immigrants would have to learn English, and they would have to go to the back of the line. When I asked him if he would support the compromise legislation if it contained a provision for tamper-proof identity cards, he said, "If we could get the I.D., it would make the rest of it work for me."

John McCain was one of the "gang of twelve" who reached a deal that promised passage of the compromise immigration bill in the Senate, barring insurrection. But insurrection came, fired by a concerted opposition campaign on conservative talk radio. In early June, with the bill still alive but badly battered, the Republican candidates gathered in New Hampshire for another debate. McCain gamely defended the legislation, which by then bore the odor of imminent defeat. But when Giuliani, whose views weren't all that different from McCain's, was asked his opinion, he said, "The problem with this immigration plan is it has no real unifying purpose. It's a typical Washington mess."

A few days later, as a guest on the Hugh Hewitt radio program, Giuliani said he thought that the immigration problem could be solved without any new legislation. By the time I saw him address a crowd at Pat Robertson's Regent University, on June 26th, his position had made a full migration. Echoing the view of the conservative broadcaster Sean Hannity, on whose show he has become a regular guest, Giuliani said he had become convinced that the U.S. government had to first demonstrate that it could control the borders before taking up the question of eventual citizenship for illegals. "If you do that," he said, when the applause died down, "I think you will see much more of an ability of the American people to accept some compromises here that will lead to sensible results."

As for securing the border, Giuliani proposes the construction of what he calls "a technological fence," which he insists would be much more effective than a simple physical barrier. Giuliani's security division is a part owner of a company that is developing such technology with the defense contractor Raytheon. The innovation is a sensor-based platform that can be launched aloft and will "see" a twenty-kilometre area, in a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree panorama. "It will be able to conduct a surveillance, actually," a person familiar with the project told me. "It can follow an individual, or follow a car, at very far distances." Giuliani emphasized to me, "It doesn't have to be that technology. We have no desire to have Raytheon benefit or whatever. There are a hundred other technologies similar to that, with the ability to process data and communicate."

When Giuliani described the immigration bill as "a big Washington mess," he was not only separating himself from his friend John McCain on a toxic issue; he was reflecting a key piece of his branding strategy. Fundamental to the Giuliani proposition is the idea of Giuliani as the essential problem-solver. "That's where I think I fulfill a need," he told me. "I can say to people, I'm good at getting things done. I'm good at setting goals, and finding a way—not all the time, but most of the time—of getting us to that goal."

Giuliani says that, as he reads the polls and travels across the country, he has been struck by the depth of unhappiness that Americans feel about their governance. "The general mood of the country, in some ways, is very similar to the general mood that New York City was in in 1993," he says. "It's a country in which people believe we're going in the wrong direction. It's kind of eerie. It's about the same percentage, it's about sixty-five, seventy per cent who think we're going in the wrong direction. People in New York felt the same thing."

Disaffection can be a politician's best friend, as Giuliani's successful 1993 campaign against David Dinkins attests. But in New York Giuliani could blame Dinkins, and the traditional New York liberal political philosophy he embodied, for the city's troubles. Exploiting the current national unease with George W. Bush and his policies will be a trick for any Republican Presidential candidate, given a two-term Republican President who had a Republican Congress to work with for most of his tenure. For Giuliani, Bush-bashing is not a political option, even if he were so inclined (and the evidence suggests that he is not). He supports the war in Iraq, defends controversial interrogation and surveillance techniques in combatting terror, and believes that Bush's tax cuts should be renewed, possibly with deeper reductions in the tax rate. His health-care ideas, set out a few weeks ago, serve the political purpose of chiding Democrats (Hillary Clinton in particular), who, he says, intend to recast the American medical system on the socialistic European model. Giuliani advocates a market-oriented system, whereby people will buy health-care policies for themselves from private insurers. He argues that in the current system, financed mostly by employers and the government, too many procedures are covered, thus driving up costs. "The government programs cover everything," he explained to one gathering. "A lot of the employer programs cover everything. So why not go buy everything? If you can get everything in the candy store, you take everything in the candy store." In a Giuliani system, the government would provide a tax credit (or, for the poor, a voucher), so that citizens could buy a health-care policy on the auto-insurance model.

Giuliani's calculation is that Republican voters are not as disappointed in Bush's policies as they are in the execution of them. They are angry not that Bush went to war in Iraq but that he hasn't won it, on the field or in the argument at home. They are pleased by his judicial appointments but mystified by his profligate spending. His party lost the last election, Giuliani complained, because "Republicans turned into Democrats."

A week after the New Hampshire debate, Giuliani outlined his solution, a twelve-point program, modelled on the 1992 Republican Contract with America, that he called "The Twelve Commitments." It included a pledge to "keep America on offense" against terrorists, secure the borders, cut spending, and appoint strict-constructionist judges. He talked relentlessly about making government accountable, and proposed employing the Compstat statistical-analysis method (a system devised originally to help the N.Y.P.D. map local crime more easily and spot neighborhood crime trends more quickly) to everything from border security to the Iraq war. ("You get what you measure," he said.) Giuliani, who once said that he wanted New York to "look more like the rest of America," now proposed that America submit to the New York solution.

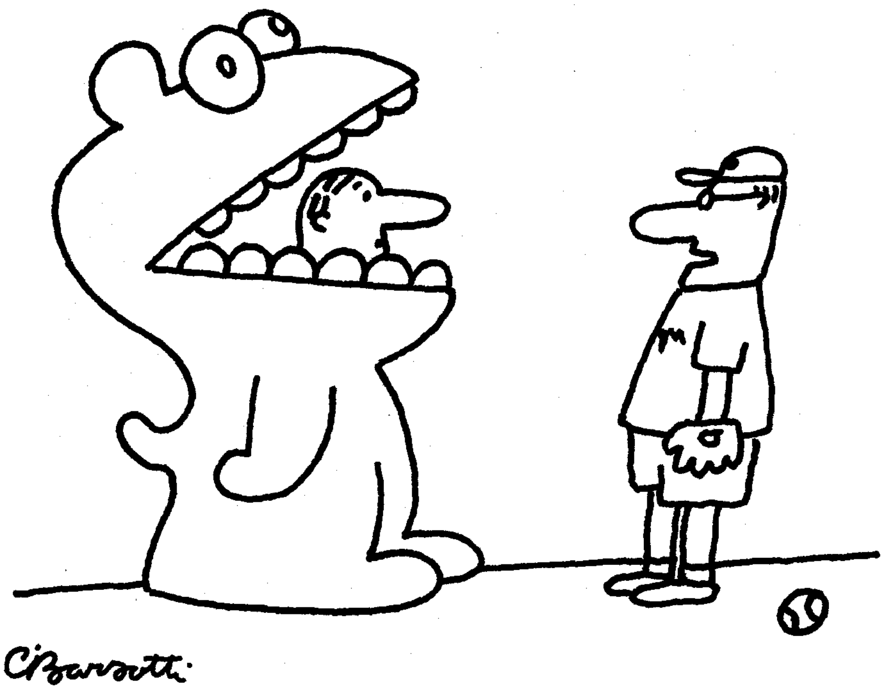
When Giuliani was preparing for his 1993 race against David Dinkins, his spare moments were often spent poring over the pages of David Osborne and Ted Gaebler's "Reinventing Government." The book, much in vogue among policy specialists of both parties at the time, proposed a model in which government was run like a business and treated its citizens as customers. It was a philosophical blueprint for what became the Giuliani program in New York City.

In June, I asked Giuliani what he was reading as he campaigned this summer. He answered, "Right now, I'm on the last chapter of Norman Podhoretz's book 'World War IV.' " Podhoretz (John Podhoretz's father) is a totemic neoconservative, one of the early group of liberal American political thinkers who broke with the left during the Cold War. Having awakened to the Soviet danger abroad, and to the excesses of the counterculture at home, Podhoretz could now see, with hyper-clarity, the world's array of malevolent forces, against which stood America, faced always with a Manichean choice between all-out victory and total catastrophe. After the attacks of September 11th, Podhoretz, the editor-at-large of *Commentary*, was among those who cast the event as part of a life-or-death global war. The construct was adopted by President Bush and given the name Global War on Terror, with implications that soon became manifest. Podhoretz sees Iraq as but one front in the larger conflict. In an essay published this spring in *Commentary*, he made the case for a unilateral American air assault on Iran as the only way to prevent its otherwise inexorable drive to nuclear status and regional hegemony.

Earlier this month, Giuliani named Podhoretz a senior adviser on his foreign-policy team. ("Yep. It's official," the *Atlantic* blogger Andrew Sullivan wrote. "The bombing begins in five minutes.") The addition of Podhoretz to the team was a dramatic political gesture by Giuliani, coming at a moment when the neoconservative agenda has been broadly discredited, and blamed for a misbegotten war. Podhoretz is so untempered a neocon that he makes Paul Wolfowitz, Bush's former Deputy Defense Secretary, and a key architect of the Iraq invasion, seem almost a moderate realist. Podhoretz knows that he carries a certain political radioactivity. While he believes that Giuliani would follow his advice to bomb Iran before it gets nuclear weapons—Giuliani, like other candidates, has said that Iran must be kept out of the nuclear club—Podhoretz hasn't asked him directly, because he doesn't want to damage Giuliani's candidacy with the inevitable controversy that an affirmative answer might arouse. Podhoretz, who is spending the summer in East Hampton, and communicates with the campaign by e-mail, has made his view clear to the candidate. When, recently, John McCain said that the only thing worse than bombing Iran is allowing Iran to get the bomb, Podhoretz told Giuliani, "I wish you had been the first to say that."

In any case, Podhoretz said to me, he believes that George W. Bush will settle the matter himself, by bombing Iran before he leaves office. "I'm probably the only person on the face of the earth who thinks that Bush will order air strikes," Podhoretz says. "But we'll find out. If Bush doesn't kick the can down the road, then the issue becomes moot, obviously. But if he fails to do what I think he will do, Rudy seems to me to be the best bet for doing what is necessary."

Podhoretz joins, among others on the foreign-policy team, the conservative Middle East scholar Martin Kramer and Charles Hill, a Hoover fellow and one of the instructors in the Grand Strategy seminar at Yale. It is Hill's thesis that the Islamic terrorists ("Islamofascists," in Podhoretz's term) are at war with the in-



*"Well, no, we don't have a mascot, but we're the Lions."*

ternational system that has ordered the world since the Treaty of Westphalia, in 1648.

Giuliani has spoken forcefully against an American pullout from Iraq—"You'd be withdrawing and retreating in the face of an enemy that has aggressive intentions toward your homeland. It makes no sense." What's more, he said to me, "at least for now, the idea that massive international organizations are going to solve problems is unrealistic. The U.N. has been irrelevant to any of the major disputes in the world probably since—gosh, Korea, maybe. Suez. It certainly wasn't relevant to Vietnam or anything after that."

Giuliani did suggest that some aspects of the Bush Administration's approach in Iraq had unnecessarily complicated American chances for success. Establishing order, and some semblance of an accountable government, he said, should have taken precedence over trying to build a democracy. "Democracy can operate only if there's a reasonable degree of order in a society." Citing Colin Powell's "Pottery Barn" warning—if you break it, you own it—he said that the United States should have had a clearly defined method of measuring success going into the war, something like a wartime version of his Compstat program of tracking crime in New York. "An Iraqstat program would have alerted us to the fact that we weren't bringing the society back to stability fast enough," he said. "When you see those statistics, maybe it says to you, We shouldn't have sent all the civil servants home. Maybe we shouldn't have de-Baathified completely. Now we don't have anybody running the post offices, and we don't have anybody running the schools, we don't have anybody running the sanitation facility. But if you kept track of those things and you saw them getting worse, and your goal was to make them better, you would then go do the things to make them better."

Giuliani often says that a chief imperative of leadership is the ability to learn from mistakes. The lesson of Iraq, in his view, is that the American effort should have been carried out more competently. "I think that the thing that will come out of this, that we're going to have to learn from the most, is not necessarily that the policies were wrong but that the fact that they weren't working wasn't realized early enough," he said to me. "And I think the changes that have been put into effect now—they'd have been much more effective if those changes had been made two years ago." A Giuliani Administration would continue to aggressively pursue the war in Iraq.

When Giuliani's tenure as mayor ended, in 2002, he left behind a city that was grateful, and more than a little relieved to see him go. He had achieved much of his program of radical reform, and he performed well on September 11th, but it had felt like an eight-year fistfight. Giuliani had fought with teachers and with Yasir Arafat, with the Brooklyn Museum and with Fidel Castro, with squeegee men, tennis fans, street venders, taxi-drivers, his own police chief, and, of course, his wife. He had repeatedly chastised New Yorkers for their incorrigible jaywalking and careless bicycling. ("All of these things are part of making the city safer. There's been a lot of ridicule about it, which is unfortunate.") Many Manhattanites felt that when the rest of the country experienced the Rudy Giuliani they knew—the flashes of pique, the slashing remark—the celebrity glow would quickly fade.

It hasn't happened yet. The Giuliani whom New Yorkers recall isn't campaigning. With some exceptions, like the debate dustup with Ron Paul, the Presidential contender is all smiles, and holds his tongue even when confronted by the occasional town-hall needler. He has taken to fence-mending as well, initiating a rapprochement with his former police chief, William Bratton, who is now running the L.A.P.D. A few days after they conferred, Giuliani told me that he could even imagine working with Bratton again some day. "I mean, I don't know if it's the effect of having been the mayor for eight years, of going through prostate cancer, or having a personal life that's much happier, or if it's September 11th—maybe it's a combination of all those things, and just getting older and wiser," he said. "But you sort of look back on some of the things and say, that was an extraordinarily productive relationship. . . . I mean, we took a city that nobody believed could be turned around with regard to crime, and really did turn it around. That's not like a political slogan. We really did it. Now that I look back on it, I really appreciate the relationship."

It is also possible that the rest of the country knows all it wishes to know about Giuliani. It was Giuliani who was depicted in the *Times* as imposing "the mores of Mayberry" on the city. Stephen DiBrienza, the former City Councilman, says, "All the things that a lot of New Yorkers, myself included, hate about this guy are the things that are actually fuelling his campaign."

One day last month, Giuliani returned to South Carolina—where the first Southern primary, on January 19th, will be a crucial test for his candidacy—for a day of campaigning, followed by a barbecue fund-raiser in the affluent Low Country town of Bluffton. Admiral Schachte, the Swift Boat veteran, was among those attending. Giuliani brought Judith Nathan with him on the trip, in her first appearance on the campaign trail since early spring. She took pictures of her husband as he posed with admirers, and animatedly joined in a debate about the relative merits of Carolina and Long Island corn. It had been a good day for Giuliani, beginning with the news that, for the first time, he led in the polls in South Carolina.

Bill Roe, a former Beaufort County Republican Party chairman, hosted the barbecue at his home, on the May River. Roe had been of the view that Judith Nathan should keep a low profile in her husband's campaign. But, after watching her interact with his guests, he changed his mind. "I'd been saying, keep her in the closet until we get this thing over," he told me. "But let me tell you—she's an asset."

Roe said that Giuliani seemed particularly at ease that afternoon. He got down on the kitchen floor and played with the family's Labradors, and asked for a plate of barbecue to take back to the campaign plane. Roe said that he was struck by something that Giuliani told the group before he left. He said that he was finally among friends. ♦

**NEWYORKER.COM**
Peter J. Boyer discusses Giuliani's campaign.

LETTER FROM OREGON

# THE MUSHROOM HUNTERS

*An edible-gold rush.*

BY BURKHARD BILGER

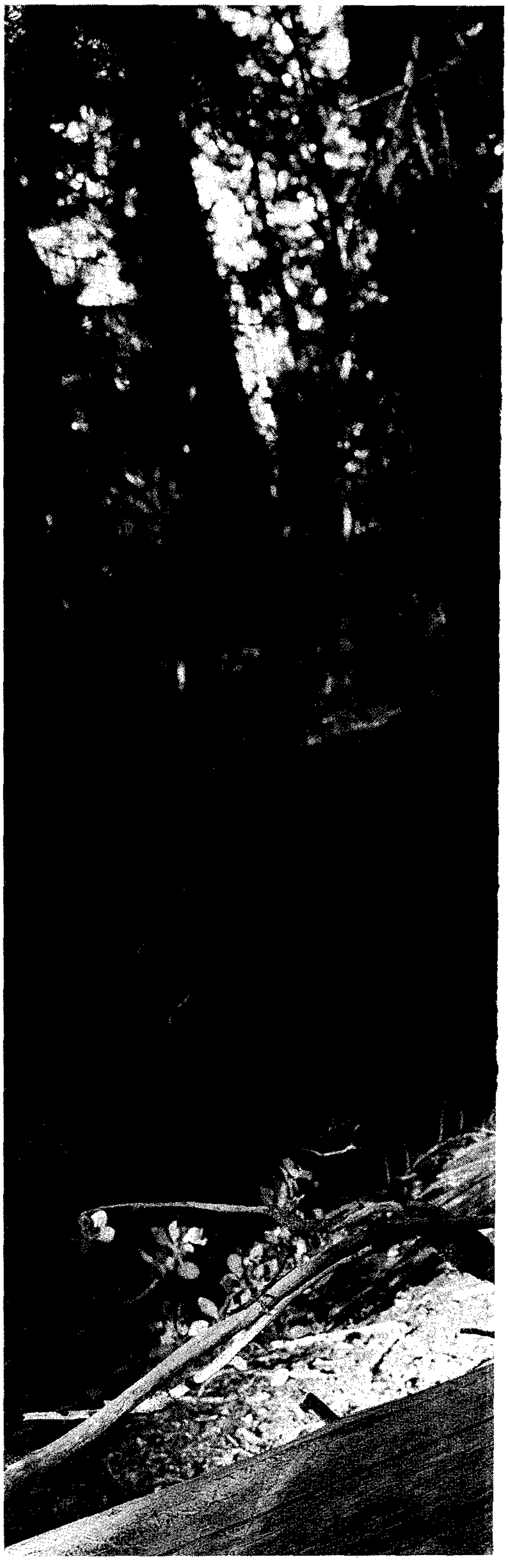
Two hours east of Eugene, Oregon, in the rain shadow of the southern Cascades, the forests begin to thin out. The volcanic peaks that loom above them are among the most active on the continent, and every so often one of them blows. The Klamath Indians still talk about the eruption of Mt. Mazama, seven and a half thousand years ago. It left a hole in the ground which is now called Crater Lake and covered the area in pumice up to three hundred feet deep. The ash still lies so thick that logging trucks send great plumes of it trailing behind them, and even old-growth trees have the spindly half-starved look of battlefield survivors. It's the kind of land that only a mushroom could love.

When Kouy Loch first arrived, on a chilly September night in 1994, he was looking for matsutake. The mountains were filled with them, he'd heard. They grew beneath the pines in the national forest—some of the most valuable mushrooms in the world—and anyone with a ten-dollar day pass could pick them. Loch's cousin Saraong, a veteran picker from Washington, had agreed to show him a good spot. The two men drove down from Tacoma that night, in separate cars, and pulled up on a gravel road deep in the forest. "This is the place," Saraong said when Kouy walked up to his window. "Matsutake country. Just go in there and pick all day." Then he drove off with a wave, leaving Loch alone by the side of the road.

The air was sharp and sweet that high in the mountains, scented with pine resin and recent rain. Loch stood in the dark for a while and listened. In the distance, he could hear the crackle of gunfire. More than a thousand other pickers were crowded into a campsite a few miles away, on United States Forest Service land. They gathered matsutake by day and sold them in the evenings to mushroom buyers in the nearby town of Crescent Lake Junction. Many of the pickers, like Loch, were Cambodians, unfamiliar with the area. They carried pistols to protect their matsutake patches and to send signals to one another in the woods. (Every few years, one or two got lost and died of hypothermia.) That night, though, they were just celebrating, shooting at the stars: the matsutake were selling for a hundred and sixty dollars a pound.

Loch had first heard of the Great Matsutake Rush two years earlier, from other Cambodians in Stockton, California. They were migrant pickers, for the most part, who spent the winter in California and the rest of the year following the wild harvest down the Pacific Coast. The season began in the spring, with morels in the Yukon or British Columbia, swung south to Montana for summer huckleberries, then west to the mountains and coastal forests of Washington and Oregon. You could pick porcini, chanterelles, and matsutake through the late fall, moving steadily south, then switch to hedgehog, black trumpet, yellow foot, and the occasional Oregon black truffle, tasting of pineapples and musk.

North America has an astonishing variety of mushroom species, but only a fraction of Europe and Japan's demand for them. The mushrooms we eat are almost always cultivated: buttons, portobellos, oysters, and shiitakes, grown in damp, murky hangars, on beds of compost or sawdust laced with spores. Interest in morels and a few other wild species has risen in recent years, but matsutake are still barely known. They tend to grow in remote areas—the jack-pine forests of Ontario; the arid mountains of central Mexico—and the deer usually get them first: their potent smell and snowy-white caps give them away. Even field guides are less than encouraging. The matsutake's "tough, chewy texture does not appeal to everyone," David Arora wrote in his 1979 book "Mushrooms Demystified." Its odor, he added, is "a provocative compromise between Red Hots and smelly socks."



*Kouy Loch hunting matsutake mushrooms. In a*

Despite its unsavory reputation overseas, the Japanese prize matsutake above all other mushrooms. They almost always eat them fresh, in the fall—a few shavings can elevate a soup to sublimity, they say—but never seem to have enough to go around. Many matsutake patches were once off limits to all but members of the imperial court, in the early harvest

*ood year, a thousand pickers work out of a camp in the Cascades. Fortunes have been made. Photograph by Yola Monakhov.*

season. A single mushroom, so young that its hood still clung to its shaft, was considered a fine gift for an aristocrat—the more phallic the better. (*Matsutake* is slang for penis in Japan; in some courts, women were forbidden to speak its name.) These days, anyone can pick matsutake, but few can afford them. A mushroom that sells for fifty dollars a pound in Oregon could bring three times that in Tokyo.

Loch was late to the rush and a novice as well. He worked as a mechanic in Stockton and hadn't picked mushrooms since he was a boy in Cambodia. (He used to roast them in the woods with the hummingbirds he killed with his slingshot.) When he asked the other pickers if he could tag along, they said no. Their patches were their livelihood, and Loch looked like a liability. He was a tall, stiff-backed thirty-three-year-old, with fierce eyes and handsome, slab-sided features. But he'd lost a leg to a land mine as a young man, and wore a prosthesis. Picking mushrooms at six thousand feet was hard with two legs, they told him. "We don't want to have to carry you down the mountain."

On his first morning in the Cascades, Loch woke up in his minivan at around seven-thirty. He ate a quick breakfast and headed into the woods, keeping a nearby lake in sight so as not to get lost. The area didn't look promising, despite what his cousin had said. Matsutake were supposed to prefer open, airy forests of pines a few decades old, and these barely came to his shoulders. By two in the afternoon, he hadn't found a single matsutake. The stump of his leg was beginning to blister against its stirrup. He was thinking of abandoning the search when he noticed a small mound in the pine duff, like a quonset hut for a gnome. He found one matsutake, then another, then several others in a ten-foot "fairy ring" around a tree. Within two hours, he had eight hundred dollars' worth in his bag.

To a mind intent on mushrooms, they can seem to be everywhere and nowhere at once. Most are merely the surface features—the strange fruit—of much larger organisms known as mycelia. Their mazy tendrils creep beneath the forest floor, over rocks and roots, under bark and leaf litter, through rotting logs and decaying bones, digesting the dead and sustaining the living. Fully half of a forest's biomass lies belowground, and half of that is fungal.

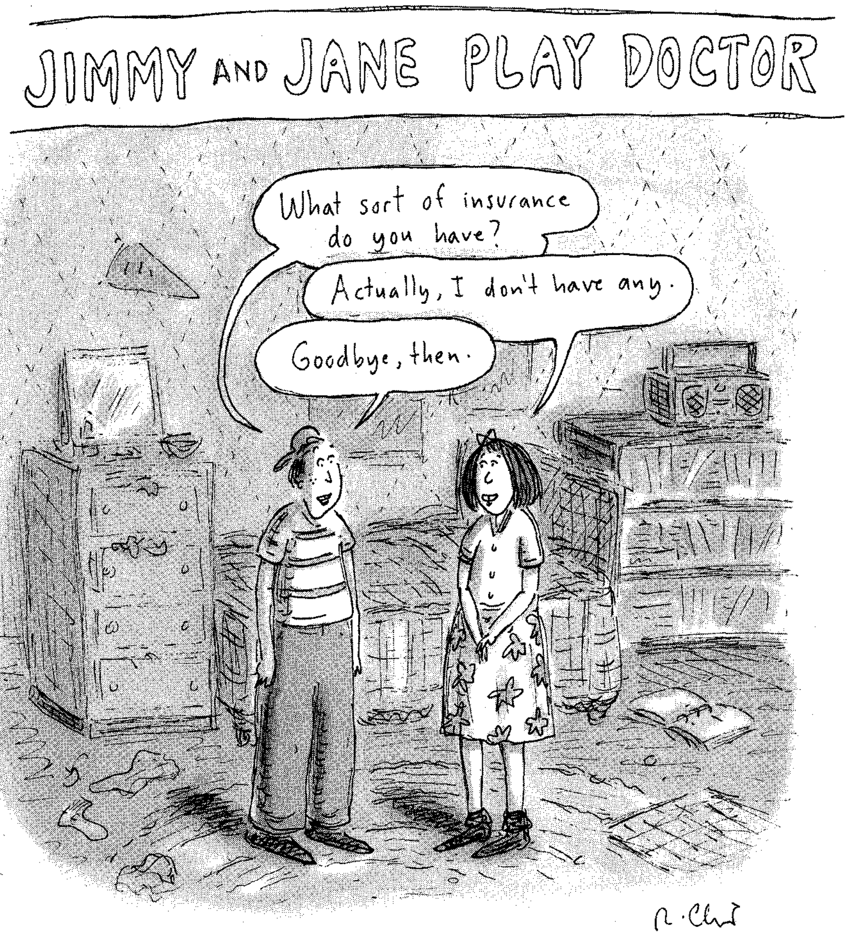
The matsutake is symbiotic with evergreens. Its mycelia latch on to their roots, pumping them full of water and nutrients—without mycelia, most trees would probably starve or die of thirst—and getting a steady drip of carbohydrates in return. Other species have less benign arrangements. The world's largest known organism, discovered in 2003, is a monstrous mycelium that preys on fir trees, causing their roots to decay. It covers more than two thousand acres in eastern Oregon, and may be more than eight thousand years old. Yet if you took a walk in those woods you might never know it was there.

The kingdom of fungi is so vast and varied—it also includes yeasts, molds, and lichen—that early taxonomists labelled one of its branches "Chaos fungorum." One species eats granite; another grows in Antarctica, an inch or so every five hundred years; yet another thrives in a Chilean desert on a diet of fog. Fungal spores are so lightweight and compact that a single bracket fungus can release thirty billion of them a day. The air we breathe is thick with spores.

Given the opportunity of a weakened immune system, some fungi are more than happy to colonize our bodies. In, "Mr. Bloomfield's Orchard," published in 2002, the mycologist Nicholas Money recalls seeing "photographs of ink-cap mushrooms growing in a patient's throat, a little bracket-forming basidiomycete in a gentleman's nose, dead babies covered in yeast, vaginal thrush gone wild, and a moldy penis that infected my nightmares for a month." In 1994, he adds, some teen-agers in Wisconsin had to be hospitalized after snorting puffball spores in the hope of hallucinating. The spores promptly lodged in their lungs.

Of the hundred thousand fungal species identified so far, a mere fraction are edible, and only a few dozen species are sold commercially. (Many more, with names like corpse finder, prefer to feed on us.) Of the edible fungi, a small handful—truffles, chanterelles, porcini, matsutake—are among the most desirable and least predictable foods on earth. Their growth may depend not just on certain trees but on trees of a certain age; not just on good weather but on a series of climatic triggers—a hot summer, say, followed by a wet fall, followed by a month of dry nights above freezing but below forty-two degrees. And still they may not grow. "Nobody really knows any of this stuff," one mycologist told me. "It's completely mysterious."

To find such mushrooms in the woods can seem a sort of miracle—the striking of a great chord, as Ian Frazier once put it—and in some areas the experience grows rarer every year. In the mid-nineteenth century, the French harvested about fifteen hundred tons of truffles annually. By the nineteen-twenties, they were finding a fifth that much; last year they harvested about thirty tons. In the Netherlands, the fungal ecologist Eef Arnolds found thirty-seven species per square kilometre in the nineteen-seventies; twenty years later, he found only twelve in the same area. The decline has been blamed on pollution, deforestation, global warm-


JIMMY AND JANE PLAY DOCTOR
What sort of insurance do you have?
Actually, I don't have any.
Goodbye, then.

ing, and other environmental changes. But mushrooms are also creatures of disturbance. Nothing encourages morels like a good forest fire, and matsutake depend on pines—often the first trees to come up after a forest burns—and a well-cleared understory. Korea, where forests were clear-cut in the nineteen-fifties, is now the world's largest exporter of matsutake. Japan, where forests have been largely untouched since the Second World War, has lost ninety per cent of its crop.

The situation has been something of a torment to the Japanese. As their harvests have dwindled, they've tried cultivating the mushrooms, with little success. Matsutake pickers, meanwhile, have spread across the globe like spores. They've found patches in China, Canada, Morocco, Sweden, Mexico, Tibet, and Russia. In the Pacific Northwest, Japanese families have collected matsutake for close to a century, but local pickers began to sell them only in the early nineteen-seventies. They kept their patches secret for more than a decade, and picked up to a hundred pounds of mushrooms in a day. Then word got out.

"It basically blew up on September 15, 1989," John Getz, a veteran picker from Florence, Oregon, told me. "One harvester spilled the beans." Getz had heard that the man owed some mushroom buyers a thirty-thousand-dollar gambling debt, so he gave them the information in order to settle up. One of the buyers drove down the next day and began to follow the pickers around. Then he gave their license-plate numbers and a map to some Asian pickers who were gathering morels for him in the area. "That was the last day that I was picking with the deer and the elk," Getz said. "By the next day, they were coming in by the thousands. It was just mind-boggling. You could have taken a seismic reading."

Loch has come back to the Cascades every fall since 1994. Like most of the pickers, he now stays in a private camp in Chemult, a town of a hundred and twenty not far from his first mushroom patch. Chemult has three hotels, three cafés, three gas stations, and a pair of convenience stores strung along a two-lane highway that cuts through the national forest. "You turn on the television and you see Britney Spears and these phones that can give you your heart rate, and I don't even have a concept of that world," Don Oldham, whose wife owns the Featherbed Inn, told me. "It's not like a land of opportunity here. It's more like escapism. It's like, 'We're done.' "

The mushroom camp sits well back from the road, across from the Featherbed. Its tents, tarps, trucks, and R.V.s are scattered in the woods behind a run-down motel, now used as apartments. The camp is owned by a stout, red-faced man named Dana Van Pelt, and managed by his grizzled, rheumy-eyed lieutenant, known as Angry Bob. Van Pelt charges a seasonal rate of seventy-five dollars for campsites and ninety dollars for rooms, and also owns the pumice mine down the road. The pumice filters the town's water to a startling clarity, lending sweetness to the noodle soup that's sold in the camp's three restaurants. The pickers flavor it with lemongrass, Thai basil, and other herbs that they bring from home in large coolers.

When I first arrived, a local man who was missing his two front teeth was delivering crates of ducks, geese, chickens, and small hairy pigs. The pigs were supposed to be butchered that night for a barbecue, but one of them got loose. It scampered down a dirt path that wound through camp, while a boy chased it with a rope. When a squeal erupted behind one of the tents, Van Pelt nodded. "Sounds like they caught him."

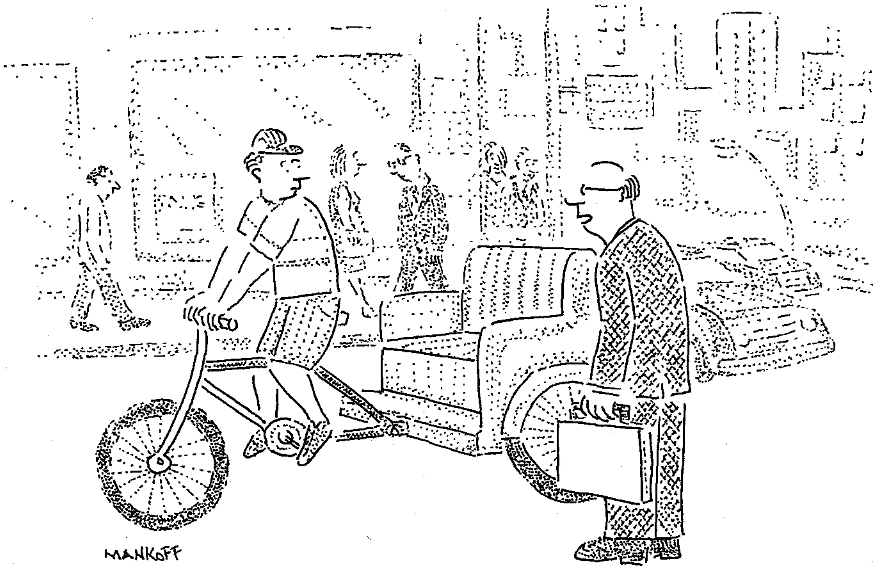
The camp is roughly divided into ethnic groups—Hmong, Mien, Cambodian, Laotian, Mexican, and Caucasian—who maintain an uneasy peace, threaded with resentment. The pickers, who are mostly Asian, mistrust the buyers, who are often white. The buyers mistrust the forest rangers, the rangers the pickers, the Asians the Hispanics, and the whites the Asians. "The one outfit you will not find here is Viet," a bilious local veteran named Roger told me. "Everybody hates them sons of bitches."

In good years, when the mushrooms are plentiful and the prices high, the camp can grow to a thousand or more. "There have literally been fortunes made," Van Pelt said. "Two or three of the guys have houses in the high six figures. It gets pretty wild. You get the drugs, the prostitution, the robbing at gunpoint, the gangbanging crap." While I was in Chemult, a Laotian woman was on trial for stabbing her husband to death with a kitchen knife and attempting to kill his second wife, whom he'd married in the camp. Over all, though, it was a poor season for mushrooms and therefore a peaceful one for pickers.

One morning, shortly after dawn, I found Loch sitting by his fire on the outskirts of camp, stiff and cranky with cold. His wife, Kanika, a moon-faced twenty-nine-year-old with brown hair in a ponytail, was steaming some rice for breakfast. Beside her, a pair of scruffy young Cambodians from the East Coast, both called T.C., were eating barbecued pork. The camp's electricity had shorted out during the night, leaving Loch, Kanika, and one T.C. freezing in Loch's battered R.V. The second T.C. had slept in his car and looked even grumpier. Other pickers kept propane stoves going all night, but Loch remembered four Hmong pickers who had died of carbon-monoxide poisoning that way. To keep warm, he and Kanika drank tea made from some giant conk mushrooms that they'd collected. It was good for ulcers, he said.

In the twelve years since Loch had arrived, he had gone from outcast to camp spokesman. The other pickers called him Hundred Things Kouy, because his English was so good, and his hands so adept, that he was continually filling out their paperwork or fixing their cars. For the past two years, Loch had worked as a "mushroom monitor" for the Alliance of Forest Workers and Harvesters, a nonprofit group that mediates between the pickers and the Forest Service.

When the rush began, the Forest Service was worried that overharvesting might destroy the matsutake patches, so it established a picking season and raised the price of permits. Some pickers agreed with the regulations, but many



*"How much if I pedal?"*

• •

thought the government was trying to drive them off, and Loch's dual role raised suspicions. Even before he became a monitor, he had been shot at by a mushroom poacher who thought Loch had turned him in. (The bullet missed, though it was fired from less than six feet away.)

Loch was having enough trouble finding matsutake already. Unlike morels, they didn't wear crinkled little hats to advertise their location. To get them before the animals did, you had to detect them belowground. "We walk nine, ten miles some days," Loch told me, that morning. "Up and down, up and down." The year before, an anthropology student from California had asked to go picking with him. "Every day, when he came by the buying station, he heard everything about fun," Loch said. "'Pick over there—fun! Pick over there—fun!' But when he came with us there is no fun. No food, no nothing. The only break time is snack time. We walk all day, and he said, 'No! Stop! I can't go on no more!'"

Loch gave me a skeptical look, like the one that the pickers in Stockton must have given him when they saw his prosthesis. Then he glanced at the two T.C.s, who muttered something in Cambodian. "They are afraid you are going to slow them down," he said. "They are afraid that you will get lost." I told him that I'd stay close by. "Can you walk downhill a long time?" Yes. "And uphill and down again?" Yes. "I will think about it."

I was a little surprised that Loch would even consider taking me along. Mushroom pickers are notoriously secretive, especially on public land. (Nothing encourages self-interest like a good freely given.) To keep the matsutake to themselves, some drag trees across access roads, or steal "No Picking" signs and post them beside their patches. Others poach mushrooms from the national park, where picking is forbidden, or harvest their patches at night by lantern light to get a jump on the new crop. A patch of mycelia will bear fruit throughout the season, and some mushrooms can grow an inch a day.

John Getz, the veteran picker from Florence, doesn't even bother going to the Cascades anymore. "The saturation level is just beyond comprehension," he says. Instead, he sticks to the coastal forests near his house, but they're getting crowded, too. Getz lays floors for a living, but he takes off three to six months every year to pick mushrooms. He harvests the same patch every twenty-four to thirty-six hours, being careful not to leave footprints. "Some hunt mushrooms," he says. "Others hunt pickers."

When Getz looks for matsutake, he bends his bony frame just above the ground and lets his long gray hair hang down, like the child-catcher in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang." He scuttles from tree to tree, scanning for patterns in the pine needles, then drops to the ground and jams two fingers in the soil. Out pops a plump matsutake. It's less like mushroom hunting than like sleight of hand. "You get so that you can see the tension in the ground," he told me. "Just that pressure. And when it's raining you can see these little light-colored rings. It's really trippy. Your eyes tune in, your brain is keeping inventory, and you just get a feeling. Something taps you on the shoulder and tells you to go pick."

Asian pickers were, if anything, even more superstitious. Some wore only certain colors in the forest, or, if any branches made too much noise, they asked the tree's permission to continue picking. (Loch knew one man who gave up on mushrooms altogether one gusty day, after some trees dropped pinecones on his head.) Still, few pickers had Getz's instincts. He found up to seventy-five pounds of matsutake a day; Loch and Kanika together averaged less than twenty-five. In six weeks of picking, they might make ten thousand dollars, but Kanika was often worn out. "My first year, I cry," she said as Loch's truck lurched up a logging road. "It hurt all over my body. I tell Kouy and he hold me. He tell me, 'Tired?' 'Yes!' 'Want money?' 'Yes!' And we start to pick again."

Loch parked the truck in a stand of red-barked sugar pines and Shasta firs. Then he and Kanika each grabbed a walking stick and a plastic bucket and headed in opposite directions. (The two T.C.s had gone to another forest to hunt by themselves.) On level ground, Loch's stride was so smooth that I had trouble keeping up with him. But on the steepest climbs it took on a torquing, herky-jerky quality that betrayed his prosthesis. Known as a Flex-Foot, this was a ten-pound mechanism of titanium, fibreglass, and carbon graphite, strapped to his left knee. "The joint and the ball bearings are kind of worn out," he said, pushing off with his stick.

Signs of other pickers were everywhere: toadstools kicked to pieces, pine duff stripped clear by a rake. "It's no good," Loch said. The matsutake could handle heavy harvesting, but only if the mycelia were left intact. When torn up or exposed, they dried out and died. "It's like you disconnect all your veins from your heart," he said. He scattered a few pine needles over the bare soil, then stepped over to investigate a bump. "Oh! Matsutake!" he said, his voice rising. When he looked closer, though, he found an odd brown fungus, curled in upon itself like a rodent's brain. He thought it was a false morel. When cooked, it could release a toxic vapor of hydrazine, also found in rocket fuel. Small amounts were harmless—false morels have long been eaten in Scandinavia—but even the tiniest overdose could cause severe liver and kidney damage. They were sometimes called "the Finnish fugu."

Death by mushroom is not uncommon in Europe: a few dozen pickers succumb almost every year. Fungi can contain natural poisons or absorb the poisons around them. In northern Scandinavia, in the nineteen-sixties, Laplanders began to show high levels of radioactivity in their tissues. It was later found that they had eaten reindeer, which had eaten fungi, which had absorbed heavy metals from nuclear tests. Some Europeans worry that the wild mushrooms now exported from Eastern Bloc countries contain similar toxins. "I won't eat them," a chanterelle lover from Germany told me in Chemult. "They're too close to Chernobyl."

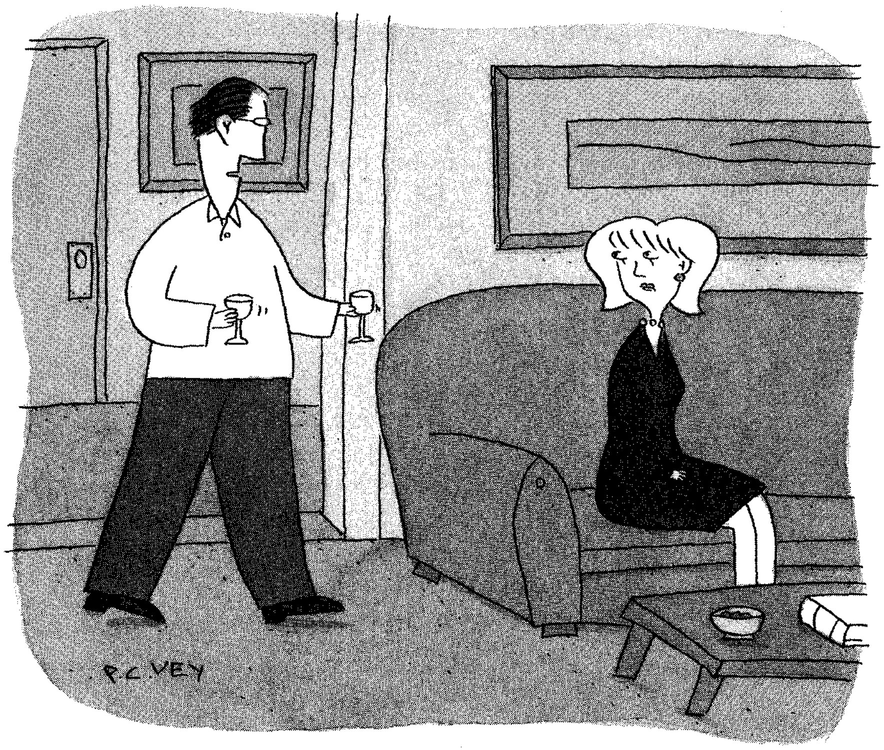
The great majority of mushroom fatalities in North America are caused by species in the Amanita family, the most notorious of which are death caps and destroying angels. These are fetching creatures, despite their names, with slender stems and prim white skirts. They're said to be delectable, yet a single cap of either mushroom can kill an adult. The danger is compounded by its delayed effect: the victim may feel fine for up to a day, then begin to vomit and suffer diarrhea and stomach cramps, before appearing to recover—by which point his liver is beyond repair. Loch found a few death caps while I was with him, but they never seemed to faze him. He'd seen deadlier things in the Cambodian woods.

Loch grew up in Battambang Province, near the Thai border, the fifth of seven children, raised in a two-room hut. His father, an officer in the Cambodian Army, was fatally wounded in 1970, when Loch was seven. Afterward, his mother sold vegetables and cigarettes to support the family, but Loch was soon foraging for himself in the woods. His teen-age years coincided with the rise of the Khmer Rouge. In 1977, when he was fifteen, Loch was thrown into a penitentiary for protesting a drop in his work team's rations. For the first four months, he was tortured every other day—his vertebrae are still barbed with bone spurs from the beatings he took. He survived only because he befriended one of the jailers, who taught him a Communist lullaby. The authorities enjoyed his singing, he says. "Everybody else that go in there all die."

Less than a year after Loch was released, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia. As the Khmer Rouge retreated, they dragged the rest of the population with them to serve as a human shield. Of the eight million Cambodians alive in 1975, fewer than six million survived four years later—it was one of the most lethal episodes in human history. Loch remembers sharing half a pound of rice with three hundred others, drinking water from wells fouled with corpses, and seeing babies abandoned on their dead mothers' breasts. When the Khmer reached the Thai border, he escaped into the rain forest and joined a band of guerrilla fighters.

"At first, we sleep on the ground like animals," he told me. "No huts, no nothing. When rain come, we get under the tarp, just one tarp for fifty freedom fighters. Later on, we chop the wood and burn it into coal and sell it to the Thai people." After three years, Loch was leading a platoon of thirty-six in raids against the Vietnamese. ("I will side with my brother against my cousin," he said. "But I will side with my cousin against a stranger.") On the morning of April 12, 1982, he was patrolling a forest mined by the Khmer Rouge when he stepped on a firing pin. The explosion disintegrated the heel and all but the smallest toe of his left foot.

A little more than a year later—after Thai soldiers had found him and carried him to a field hospital; after his left leg had been amputated below the knee; after he had joined his mother and siblings at a refugee camp and was granted asylum in the United States—Loch arrived in Stockton and began a new life. He enrolled in a three-year trade school and took a job as a mechanic for Nissan. He married a Cambodian, had three children, and earned a second degree, in engineering. He lost his mother to uterine cancer, his wife to an ugly divorce, and his job to the depression that followed, and eventually he found



*"Sorry I took so long. I went to the bathroom, tried climbing out the window, and got stuck."*

himself in the Oregon woods with a thousand other wayward migrants.

On our first day together in the woods, I asked Kanika how she and Loch came to be married. She told me that their mothers were sisters, and Loch had sponsored her immigration, in 2001. "I feel sorry for him. His wife cheat on him, leave him three boys, and the little boy has no clothes. Kouy say, 'You want to marry with me?' And I say, 'Yes, because I want to help you. I want to cook for you.' " Three years later, she gave birth to a girl, whom they named Janette—Cambodian for "one slice." They'd brought her to the Cascades the previous fall, leaving the older children with Loch's brother in Stockton, but the camping was hard on her. "She was so cold," Loch said. "When I see her nose is running, I say, 'Oh, God, what am I doing here with my daughter?' "

As the afternoon passed, the forest filled with a dusty light, hatched by the shadows of pines. Kanika called out to Loch from time to time in a high, forlorn voice, like a hoot owl, letting him know where she was. (She called him Bang, which means "older brother"; he called her Aun, which means "little sister.") She found a clutch of immature matsutake beneath a blanket of duff—"Oh, baby ones!"—and tucked them carefully back in. She scolded the deer for eating her mushrooms and praised them for avoiding the poison ones. Finally, she called out to Loch again, louder this time: she wanted to go home. A moment later, his voice drifted back to us through the trees: Wait.

I sat down on the log beside her—my feet hurt—and looked around. We'd wandered into a small glade open to the sky. A circle of shaggy sugar pines stood around it, like brooding hens, and gathered in the last of the day's warmth. I wish I could say it was then that a voice rang in my head, telling me where to pick. But it was Kanika squealing next to me. She had grabbed my arm and was pointing at the little mounds all around us. "Matsutake!" she said. Then she fell to her knees and began to dig.

A wild mushroom, once picked, drops down the rabbit hole of the commodities market and may wind up, two days later, five thousand miles away—a forager's food turned exotic delicacy. "Urgency is the key," a buyer named Terry Culp told me. "Mushrooms are ninety per cent water, and as soon as you buy them they start to shrink. By the time you get to the warehouse, you could lose ten thousand dollars." Terry and his twin brother, Torry—they call their company Territory Mushrooms—are forty-eight and have been in the business since 1980. They spend half the year on the road, from the Yukon to Oaxaca, buying twenty-six varieties of mushrooms from migrant pickers. "We were into mushrooms before mushrooms were cool," Terry said.

In the Cascades, the Culps operate out of a row of prefab storage bays along the highway, behind some tents run by other buyers. Blond and blue-eyed, with throaty tenors and inflated biceps (they bring along barbells and a Bowflex machine wherever they travel), they're easy to spot in a crowd of dark, slender Asians. Torry works the pickers in the parking lot, leaning into car windows to negotiate prices, while Terry buys mushrooms inside. Matsutake are graded from one to six—one for the young and pristine, whose hoods have yet to open; six for the worm-eaten and overmature. On the nights I watched them, the Culps were paying as much as forty dollars a pound for ones and a dollar a pound for sixes. Terry would weigh them, sort them into bins, and shout out the values to his girlfriend Gwen, at the register. In the corner, their dog, Kasha—an enormous Akita-king shepherd mix that they liked to call "the international mushroom hound"—stood guard over the inventory.

By ten o'clock, a truck was idling outside, ready to load the quarter ton of mushrooms that the Culps had bought. The driver, having made the ten-hour trip from Vancouver that day, would head north again and arrive in Canada the next morning. The matsutake would be wiped clean and packed in Styrofoam boxes, chilled with gel packs, and sent overnight to Tokyo. There most would be sold wholesale, at the Tsukiji market, and arrive at last in grocers' window displays, nestled in baskets with pine boughs and orange blossoms.

Terry estimated that his sales had tripled in the United States in the past ten years, but that pickers were finding only half as many mushrooms. (He blamed global warming.) In a good season, he might gross two hundred thousand dollars and clear sixty thousand after expenses; in a bad season, he said, "we're sleeping in Grandma's bed." His income was both hostage to the unpredictability of his produce and dependent on it: if the same mushrooms could be farmed, he'd be out of a job.

Mycologists have had mixed success with domestication. The French have known how to inoculate oak and hazelnut seedlings with truffle spores since the nineteen-seventies. They now have some forty thousand acres of truffle plantations. Morels have been raised on bark and leaf compost since the nineteen-eighties, and are being grown industrially in Michigan. But porcini have remained resolutely wild, as have chanterelles. In 1996, a mycologist named Eric Danell coaxed some chanterelles into growing on Scotch-pine seedlings. He has since returned to his native Sweden, where he has established twenty-four chanterelle plantations; though a number of them have mycelia, none have yet borne fruit. "We have suffered rabbit attacks and insect attacks," Danell told me. "Or maybe I have created plantations that don't mimic nature too well."

Matsutake have been even less coöperative. Despite a century of exhaustive research, the Japanese have yet to establish a plantation. They've sequenced most of the mushroom's genome, replanted cuttings from host trees, inoculated seedlings with cultures, and experimented with fertilizers. Yet the mycelia never survive transplant. "It's a much more difficult challenge than truffles," Charles Lefevre, a mycologist who did his Ph.D. work on matsutake at Oregon State, told me. "Matsutake always live in the worst soils—sand and pumice—so they demand much more from their hosts." A truffle can grow near a five-year-old tree, but the matsutake prefers a host that is at

## DRIVING HOME

Minister of our coming doom, preaching
On the car radio, how right
Your Hell and damnation sound to me
As I travel these small, bleak roads
Thinking of the mailman's son
The Army sent back in a sealed coffin.

His house is around the next turn.
A forlorn mutt sits in the yard
Waiting for someone to come home.
I can see the TV is on in the living room,
Canned laughter in the empty house
Like the sound of beer cans tied to a hearse.

—*Charles Simic*

least forty years old. "There is just something that the tree provides that we don't," Lefevre said.

Early one evening in Chemult, Lefevre joined me for a bowl of soup at the mushroom camp. He had driven up from Eugene that morning, and we'd spent the day hiking around his old study sites. Short and burly, with forked eyebrows and chestnut curls, Lefevre looked a bit like a satyr and had some of the same earthy intensity. He grew up in Oregon, he said, the youngest of eight children, and was a mushroom hunter long before he was a mycologist. In his mid-twenties, after getting a degree in biology, he spent four years in a biotech lab, working with snake venom and cracking open sheep skulls to extract proteins from their brains. Then, one day, while he was out in the woods, he came upon a sign that said "Matsutake Study Area." "It occurred to me that I was spending all my free time mushroom hunting," he said. "Why not do this for a living?"

Lefevre's story was interrupted by the arrival of our soup. It was a clear brown broth, fragrant with coriander, and filled with cabbage, noodles, pork balls, and Asian herbs. But there were no matsutake in it. They were too valuable to put in a three-dollar dish, I supposed. The few matsutake that I'd had in Chemult—mostly grade fives, grilled over an open fire—had been sweet and firm, with a bright, piney aroma and a rich, meaty flavor. No hint of Red Hots or smelly socks. "When done well, they're just sublime," Lefevre said. But most Americans don't know how to prepare them. We tend to sauté mushrooms in butter or oil to bring out their flavor, he explained. "Truffles, chanterelles, porcini—their aroma is fat-soluble. But the matsutake's aroma is water-soluble—it will not infuse fat. They're much better in soups or in rice, using a Japanese technique."

When Lefevre was writing his thesis at Oregon State, he hired a Japanese student to translate some scientific papers for him. They agreed that for every paper he completed, the student would get one matsutake from Lefevre's site in the Cascades. "He was sure that he was getting the better part of the deal," Lefevre told me. "He said that his family would scrape together enough money every Christmas just to buy one matsutake." At one point, Lefevre said, he admitted that he wasn't wild about the mushrooms—they were kind of chewy, he said—and the student rolled his eyes. "He said he'd never had a piece large enough to chew."

Lefevre gave up the idea of growing matsutake while he was still in graduate school—it was just too hard—and shifted his sights to truffles. Now forty-one, he helps run the annual Oregon Truffle Festival, in Eugene, and owns New World Truffieres, a company that sells oak and hazelnut seedlings that he inoculates with black and white truffle spores. As many as fifty thousand truffle trees are planted in the United States every year, Lefevre estimates, and the market is still in its infancy. "The pioneers will do it now—the risktakers, the adventurers," he said. "I feel like I'm riding a wave. It's building and building. It's really kind of euphoric."

He was quiet for a moment, then he gave me a small, skewed smile. He felt a little ambivalent about being back in the Cascades. He used to come here as a mushroom picker; now he spent his time trying to make pickers obsolete. The ones in Chemult were safe for now: the matsutake remained stubbornly untamed. But a single new strain, adapted or engineered to grow near younger trees, might make plantations possible. "It's one of the holy grails of the mushroom world," Lefevre said. "But I kind of don't want to see it domesticated. I don't want to see it cultivated."

People have been fostering truffles for a very long time, and there have been crude methods for farming black truffles for two centuries. But the matsutake has always been collected in the wild. In Japan it's a cherished seasonal delicacy, like cranberry sauce. "To suddenly take that out of its cultural context and make it available year round—to have it become commonplace—that would be a sad thing," Lefevre said. "And it would have a massive economic impact on rural people all over the world."

After dinner, Lefevre and I walked over to the camp's largest noodle tent, which also served as its casino, karaoke bar, and town hall. Some trays of rice and stir-fry had been set out on wooden planks, and the stereo was on. I could see Kanika and Loch whispering in a corner, their heads bent together, and a crew of young Laotians in army fatigues, bragging about their day's haul. The owner of the Featherbed Inn was talking to an anthropologist from Santa Cruz, and Dana Van Pelt was having a beer with Angry Bob. "There are a thousand reasons that people are out here," Lefevre said. "But mushroom pickers are all misfits in one way or another." He laughed, and I could tell that he still counted himself among them. "That's one of the wonderful things about this industry," he said. "It gives the misfits something to do." ♦

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A slide show of the matsutake harvest in Oregon, photographed by Yola Monakhov.

FICTION

# SWIMMING

BY T COOPER

People say to me, "Didn't you hear anything?," or "Why didn't you stop when you felt something hit the bumper?" But I don't know how to answer either question. He was just there with us, alive, one minute, as we were eating barbecue and watching the Super Bowl on TV at my brother-in-law's house, and then the next minute he was dead—very dead—under our car. I sold the car after that. My wife strongly suggested I do so, and that was when I was still trying to do pretty much anything she strongly suggested. In the end, I suppose that's what made it possible for me to come to Cambodia. I got something like twelve grand, cash, for that car.

I've been living in Kep for a year and a half now, in a crappy little two-room bungalow I rent on the beach. It's fifty dollars a month, and it's literally *on* the beach, the wild gray Gulf of Thailand chop not twenty feet from where I lay my head at night. I think I fit in pretty well here, as well as a white guy can. A *haole*, or *cracker*, not that those names apply here. The Cambodians don't seem to have a derogatory name for "white person." In Thailand, there's *farang*, but that's not really derogatory—they'll say it to your face. And I don't think there's an equivalent in Khmer. At least, if there is one I don't know it.

Only two people in town know that I killed my son. There's the expat Colin, who runs the coffee shop and guesthouse in Kampot, and there's Veata, but I never know how much of what I tell her she really understands. It came up not long after I learned that she had a son, a fact that she had been keeping from me because—you know what? I don't know why she was keeping it from me. I think her mother had told her to. But I'm no smitten soldier boy—I'm not going to take Veata home with me and send money back to her family every month. So I didn't really care that she had a son—it didn't matter either way. Which is also why I can admit that Angel's actually kind of cute. He's named after Veata's patron saint, Angelina Jolie. Veata says, "He handsome like Maddox," and she styles his hair in a faux hawk. He's the only five-year-old running around Kampot with a faux hawk and trendy camouflage pants.

SHEILA GRIFFIN (2005)

The day I learned who Angel was, Veata and I had just finished having sex, when her parents burst into the front room of my house with Angel wrapped in a blanket. He was bleeding from his nose, listless. I'd seen him a couple of times before, when Veata was looking after him, but she'd told me that he was her sister's son and that she was just babysitting.

Veata threw on my robe, and I quickly pulled on some boxers and scrub bottoms and went out to the other room, shirtless, to see what the problem was. Veata's father stared at the tattoo on my chest. I assumed that he wanted to kill me. If I were him, I would've wanted to kill me, too. But he didn't. When you have next to nothing, I guess it's not so insane to pin your hopes to a silly daughter's fantasies and faux hawks.

Veata's father put Angel on the floor, and I knelt over him. Veata and her parents spoke in Khmer, very softly and quickly, so as to prevent me from understanding. I can speak very rudimentary Khmer, but I can understand a great deal more after living here for so long, so I knew that Veata was telling her parents not to reveal that Angel was her son, and her mother was replying that Angel was very sick and they needed my help.

During my first week in town, I witnessed a really brutal motorcycle-versus-truck accident on the road between Kampot and Kep. One person—the driver of the motorcycle—died, and his passenger's leg snapped in half. I temporarily set this guy's open-femur fracture and stabilized him so that he could get on the bus to the hospital in Phnom Penh, three hours away. Word got around, and after that ailing villagers sometimes showed up at my door. I generally just directed them to the clinic in town, which has I.V.s and antibiotics and basic first-aid stuff that I don't have. But if they were really poor, and I could handle the problem, I'd do it myself. I didn't take their money, and the clinic took a lot.

So there was Angel on the ground, bleeding from his little nose, and Veata's mother started to cry in little muffled hiccups, and then Veata started to cry even louder, and all I wanted her to do was go back into the bedroom and put some clothes on so that she wouldn't be standing there with her titties hanging out of my robe in front of her father. I took the kid's pulse and counted his respirations. He was very hot to the touch.

"Why did you bring him all the way here instead of to the clinic?" I asked.

Nobody said anything.

"Clinic? Kampot town?" I repeated.

Veata's father shook his head twice, quickly, like he was saying no to a price in a negotiation.

"I don't have what he needs," I said.

I didn't feel anything looking at that kid. Not one thing beyond the clinical. It was obvious by then that he was Veata's child. I could see it just by looking at his pretty face.

Veata's parents didn't speak a word of English, so I asked her, "What do they want?"

"They walk here" is all she said.

I tried to get Angel to drink some water from a glass, but he wouldn't take any, and the blood from his upper lip dripped into the glass of water, dispersing into a puff of maroon haze. I picked him up, rewrapped the blanket around him, and passed him over to Veata. I pulled on a T-shirt in the bedroom, and then came back out and took Angel again, nodding toward the bedroom for Veata to go in and get dressed.

Veata's parents just stood there staring at me while she was gone. A storm was coming in off the gulf; you could feel a change in the humid wind. The waves lapped more frequently on the sand behind my house, rocks rolling noisily over themselves.

The wrinkles in Veata's father's face were positively elephant-like. He'd seen a lot. It was probably a miracle that he was alive. But I didn't want to hear the story of his hiding out in some cave for years while Pol Pot killed the rest of his family or any crazy shit like that. I didn't want to have to care, to have to marry his daughter and have a little half-American, half-Khmer kid who'd play soccer really well and have a funky haircut and be especially popular at the prep school we'd send him to in Connecticut or Vermont.

Mercifully, Veata came back clothed and we headed out front to my motorcycle. I told her to hold onto Angel and get on the back. Her parents followed us out and wordlessly watched us go. I looked back over my shoulder, pretending to check for cars—which never come by here—and caught a glimpse of them standing a couple of feet apart in front of my little house off the main dirt road.

At the clinic, I asked the nurse to start Angel on an I.V. drip, just basic Ringer's lactate, and then to push some antibiotics as soon as we realized he had an infection going on. He was burning up: 105. Kids can die with that kind of fever. When I was a boy, I used to get fevers like that, and my mother would sit me in an ice-cold bath and pretend to make different outfits out of washcloths (tuxedo, tank top, wetsuit), draping the freezing wet cloths over my chest, arms, and head in hope of bringing down my temperature and avoiding a trip to the emergency room.

Angel had to stay at the clinic overnight. I left Veata there and drove the fifteen miles back to my place, shuttling first her mother and then her father back to the clinic to be with her. I didn't say anything to either of them the whole time. Except once, when I gestured to Veata's mother to watch out for the muffler on the bike, which was searing hot, just millimetres away from her thigh. When all three of them were at the clinic together, I turned to head back home, but Veata came out onto the deck and grabbed my elbow with her bony, birdlike fingers.

"I have to get my swim in," I said to her. "Swim?"

I had to get my swim in. My daily swim that I paid good money at a good exchange rate to insure.

She looked at me with those full eyes, the kind that peek out of the tourist brochures for Southeast Asian cruises that stop in seven countries in seven days. I wanted to see hatred in those eyes, but all I saw was my own reflection.

"I had a son," I said then.

"You have son?" she asked.

"Yes," I said, looking across the street, over the Kampot River and up at Bokor Mountain. Fog was hanging from the places where the jungle protruded from the dark-green mountain. "I killed him, though. I killed him."

I don't know why I always said things twice around her. Ostensibly it was because she didn't understand English very well, but I'm sure that there was some other reason. Some sort of superiority thing. I have that. Doctors have that. Even doctors in training, like I was.

"I hit him with my car—accident," I said. "He ran in front of the car. I hit him. Accident."

Veata's mother came out onto the deck then, the torn screen door slamming shut behind her. She spoke softly to her daughter, and I stepped aside and lit a cigarette to give them some privacy. After a few exchanges with her mother, Veata turned to me and said, "Cockroach go in Angel nose."

This was something I'd heard about in med school. I remember the textbook for my pediatrics course saying something to the effect of "If a child presents with an infection and is a resident of a lower-income neighborhood, such as a housing project or other state- or city-subsidized environment, suspect an insect as a potential aggravating factor."

Insects tend to crawl into small, dark, moist spaces. Seals crawl up onto land. Whales beach themselves. But I did not want to miss my daily swim. It was my right. For killing my child I had earned the right to swim once a day in the beautiful and sometimes smelly Gulf of Thailand. The right to fuck the youngest, hottest girl with the tightest pussy in town and make her fall in love with me and yet bear no responsibility toward her or her family beyond shuttling them to the clinic when their grandchild was ill. My God-given rights.

I missed my swim that day. The nurse-practitioner sedated Angel, extracted the roach from his nose, and amped up his antibiotics. He would soon be fine, back running around Kampot's red-mud streets with his black hair spiked and newly shorn, just like Maddox Jolie's.

It started raining while I was on the road to my house, and my rear brake stopped working. I pulled to the side of the road, where some kids were playing in the three inches of water that filled the small, square rice paddy in front of their house. It was a one-ox, two-story household, and there were a bunch of crusty chickens huddling under a tree to escape the rain. The boys looked up at me and laughed, pointing. Muddy water dripped from my hair into my eyebrows, lashes, and eyes, as I knelt to unscrew the lever that activated the rear brake. It had been wailing like crazy as I drove, metal on metal, but I didn't have the time to deal with it then. Nor the tools. So I drove about five miles per hour the rest of the way back to Kep, using only my front brake—and sparingly at that. Stuck in second gear with a squirrelly front brake, I finally gave up all hope of a swim. It was dark, and it wasn't worth risking a jellyfish crossing my path.

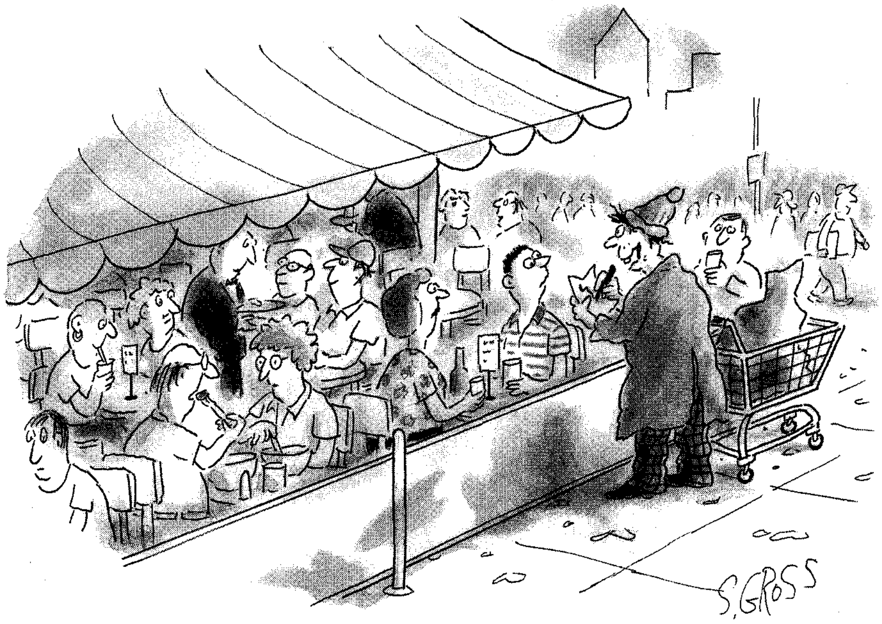
The next day, I went for my swim the minute I woke up. *My* swim. I wanted to make up for having missed the day before. I wondered momentarily about Angel's infection, but as quickly as the thought had entered my consciousness it was gone again, and I was pulling on my trunks, swallowing a couple of little starchy bananas, and stepping out onto the bright beach. The storm had passed during the night, and there was some debris on the shore, a few stray coconuts and palm branches. The water was uncharacteristically glassy. I waded out up to my waist, pulled my goggles on, and dived in, staying submerged and swimming as long as I could before my first breath ran out. The water was too warm, but I pumped away freestyle, going as hard as I could for probably fifteen minutes before I felt even remotely winded. I felt as if I could sprint like that for hours. You know that feeling when you can't get enough breath and every time you turn up for air you don't know if you're going to get a salty mouthful down your gullet or not? That feeling where you're pushing so hard that you understand how a body could just as easily die as live, that living is just the absence of death, and thus always in a relationship with death? That's what it had felt like fucking Veata that morning, too—like, *bring it on, I don't care*—and then there was the frantic knock on the door and her parents were in my front room, and I thought I'd derive at least some satisfaction from staring that man, her father, in the face when he knew full well I'd been pounding away at his daughter seconds before. But you know what? There was nothing there. I felt more sorry for him than anything else, standing there all skinny and no taller than my own mother, holding his limp little camouflaged grandson in his arms.

I was swimming around the other side of the point and saw a long purple jellyfish in front of me, a few feet below. I turned toward the beach in case he had friends. I was in unfamiliar water, but I didn't slow my stroke. I kept going, around the next bend and past the abandoned cinder-block house with no roof where a pack of dogs live with their pups. I kept cutting through that thick water, my shoulders burning in the water-magnified sun, and then all of a sudden I got this acute feeling that I'd forgotten something, something really big—that jittery flutter running the length of my musculature which I used to get sometimes even before Jake died. Even the water tasted different, as if something metallic were making all the particles buzz.

I stopped my stroke, pulled up, and trod water. I pushed my goggles up onto my forehead, and as my vision un-blurred I saw that there were three or four guys on the beach, standing around a massive, bloated dead animal. As I paddled closer I realized that it was a whale shark, its head and mouth smashed in, trailing thick blood into the water from the beach. Tiny waves lapped at the creature's wide mouth.

I swam all the way in to shore, and when I stepped onto the sand I looked at my arms and legs, a red film hewing to the hair and the skin. I stood on the edge of the scene, but only one of the guys noticed me at first. He just turned and looked with no discernible expression on his face. He was beautiful like a woman. He turned back and said something to the two men who were on the other side of the fish, hacking away at the connective tissue around its liver. It was gigantic, the liver—blood-purple—and the two guys were covered in bloody entrails. The man who'd noticed me walked up the fish's tail then and stood on top of the creature, cockily resting an elbow on the dorsal fin as if he were bellying up to a bar. The thing had to be thirty or forty feet long.

I wasn't angry when Jake died. But those guys' girlish little necks—I pictured my hands gripping them each tightly, and then snap, snap, *snap*. I walked closer, still catching my breath from the workout or the panic attack or both. None of the men smiled or really acknowledged me at all, though I vaguely recognized the one who was standing on top of the fish from the market in Kampot. The others just kept sawing away at the creature, whose spotted skin was now dull and rubbery in the sunlight. Dime-size flies had moved in, a swarm of them in the heat, and a few of the neighboring stray dogs sat in the shade on the perimeter, waiting to clean up. The men continued to ignore me, even when I stepped around behind them to get a closer look at the whale shark's liver and chest cavity.



*"Hello. My name is Maury, and I'm going to be your crazy person today."*

• •

When my wife asked me to take a temporary leave from the hospital to spend time with her, I took a leave from the hospital and spent all my time with her.

When she asked me to move us to Vermont to be closer to her family, we moved to Vermont to be closer to her family.

When she asked me to move us back to the city to get away from her family, I found us a condo in Chelsea.

When she went off the pill and asked me to make love to her, I dropped everything and made love to her.

When she asked me not to touch her again, I didn't touch her. I slept on the couch and watched five straight seasons of "M*A*S*H" reruns on the Hallmark Channel from eleven to one every week night. On weekends I played Internet poker, against a guy from Wisconsin named Hal.

When she asked me to do something—anything—to show that I was as destroyed by this as she was, I dragged her to a hipster tattoo studio in Williamsburg and squeezed her hand while a mook with Johnny Cash-black hair and dice tattooed on each of his knuckles carved Jake's name into my chest in huge Gothic script.

When she asked me to go back to work, I tried to get a residency in New York. And when I couldn't get a residency in New York I got one in New Jersey and commuted to Trenton, making it back to sleep on the couch every off-duty night, without exception.

When she said she needed to be distracted, to get a job of her own, I told her to get a job of her own, and she did, volunteering at a local public-radio station downtown.

When she said that there was a paid opening at the station and she wanted to apply for it, I said, Great, apply for the paid position, and so she did, and she got the job and worked a hectic nonprofit schedule, sometimes six days a week.

When she asked me to donate to the station and come to the holiday party, I donated to the station, put on a festive tie, and brought a fruitcake to the holiday party.

When she said that she needed to spend time with the producer of the afternoon music show because he understood her, because he'd lost a child to cancer, I said, Great, spend time with the producer of the afternoon music show because he lost a child to cancer.

And when she asked me to leave I left.

The producer moved in, and I took a little chunk of cash, left the rest for her, and bought a ticket to Bangkok.

I said that I was sorry. I'd thought he was inside. I wasn't drinking. I was just tired. I didn't even like football, or barbecue, or her brother's wife, the frigid bitch. And I couldn't say whether I'd heard something hit the bumper or not. I didn't know I'd hit anything—hit him—until I finished parking the car and saw his little shoe by the tire. Obviously, if I'd heard something I would have stopped. I've stopped for less. I've stopped for a squirrel.

I drove my bike to Colin's coffeehouse in Kampot and researched whale sharks on the Internet. They were threatened and protected, but a set of fins went for five hundred dollars a kilo, in the right hands. And the liver was like gold.

An Australian girl with a pink bandanna on her head was giggling loudly at the computer behind me as I read. She was instant-messaging her parents back home for more money, and detailing the conversation for her friend, loud enough so that everyone in the coffeehouse could hear. I fantasized about sending somebody to Phnom Penh to rob her when she visited the cash machine. Just to show her.

Before getting off the computer, I logged onto my e-mail account, which I hadn't checked in a couple of weeks. There were a few new messages there, one from my wife from a week before. I opened it and read the first line. She'd sent the divorce papers for me to sign months ago, but I hadn't picked them up from general delivery, and they hadn't been returned to her, either, so she didn't know what to do.

"Colin, can I use this address for some documents I need?" I called over my shoulder.

"Sure."

I hit Reply and typed Colin's name and business address, then skimmed over the rest of her note as an afterthought. She said that she was pregnant—with a girl—and wanted to get married to What's His Face before she delivered, in a few months. I hit Return a few times after Colin's address, and wrote, "I hope you feel better this time around," before going back and erasing the line. When she was pregnant with Jake, she threw up for three months straight. I started typing again, "I hope you don't get sick as much," but then erased the "as much" and stared at the blinking cursor after "sick" for a few minutes.

Colin brought my coffee and set it next to the keyboard. Espresso was apparently the one thing I truly couldn't live without. "Here you go, man. Enjoy," he said.

I typed a period and hit Return, and then, "Enjoy it this time." I quickly erased "this time," hit the period key again, and left it at that. "Enjoy it." I clicked Send, logged out, and took a sip of my coffee, which seared my tongue. I love that first sip.

Driving back to Kep later that evening, I took the side road that hugs the coastline until I got to the house where the dogs live, which was surprisingly quiet and empty for that time of night. I pulled out onto the sand through the brush, and my back wheel got stuck a few times, but I walked the bike out of the holes and managed to get onto wetter sand.

All that was left of the whale shark was a bunch of slop. There were about fifty dogs fighting over it in the bloody sand. I vomited a little from the smell. Indescribable. I covered my nose and mouth, straddling my idling bike. It was getting dark, but the moon was bright enough for me to see two very wide, deep tire tracks in the sand, leading all the way back up to the main road.

I didn't go back to Kampot town for a couple of days, or maybe a week, and I can't honestly say what I did that whole time. I barely ate. I did swim every day, sometimes twice. I drank up my stash of warm beer, and when I ran out of food and water and was low on gas I headed to Kampot for supplies. I swear Veata can sense me coming from a mile away—she's like a dog that way—because she was in front of the market before I could swing my leg over my bike seat and cut the engine.

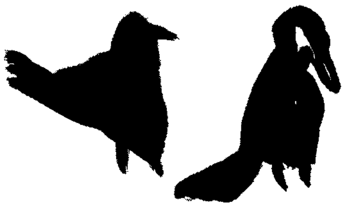
"Where you been?" she asked.

"Home."

"Why you go to police? Why you go say Sopat do something wrong?"

"Because he did—he did do something wrong."

"No, no, he didn't do something wrong," she said. It was the first time she had ever not been in complete agreement with me. "He say you do something wrong."



"Me? Me. I did something wrong," I said. "That's great. That's just fucking great."

"Sopat say you make a hard time for him and all of them. Now they come and want more money from them. They take away the fins."

"Who? Who took the fins?"

"You know who," she said. "You—"

"Well, whale sharks are protected," I said. "They're all dying, and nobody's supposed to kill them. Not your cousin, nobody."

"Sopat, he is very angry."

"I don't care if Sopat is angry."

"He say he just swim up on beach. The fish just swim right up on beach and he was very sick."

"He didn't swim up onto the beach, Veata."

"He do that. Sopat say he do that."

"No, he didn't. They killed that poor thing. They went out and killed it. Its face was bashed in!" I yelled.

Veata flinched ever so slightly when I raised my voice, and with a swift kick to the fuel tank that came virtually out of nowhere she knocked my motorcycle over, and it crashed to the ground noisily, gasoline spilling into the dirt, spewing a little purple rainbow.

"What the fuck are you doing?" I screamed, even louder than before, and a few people nervously looked my way from the outer edge of the market—the same outdoor market where I'd first spotted Veata, in my second week in town. She and her friends had giggled uncontrollably from behind her uncle's vegetable stand, where they were helping out. They had continued to laugh when I came up and asked in English to buy a loaf of bread that Veata's mother was selling.

Alas, the flirty Veata smile was no different from the one she sported after kicking over my motorcycle. I picked up my bike and reset the kickstand. My left rearview mirror was broken. "You're fucking crazy," I spat. She just kept smiling.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Veata's mother approaching, with Angel in tow. When Angel spotted his mother he ran up and hugged her around the thighs, the way little boys do. He eyed me suspiciously, but I could tell that he wanted me to pay attention to him. Veata's mother said something in Khmer and then motioned toward me.

"My mother say my father say he want to thank you for taking care of Angel," Veata said.

"I didn't do anything for Angel."

"Well," she said, her mother nodding and smiling behind her, "we have a special dinner tonight, and my father, he want you to come."

"No, I can't," I said. I knew full well how rude this was.

Veata's mother frowned. Veata looked like she hated me. Pure hatred, and I had to agree.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked her.

She didn't answer. Her mother said something again, and Veata argued with her. Angel kept looking up at me from his mother's leg, his little faux hawk crooked and flattened in the back.

"My mother say you must come. My father, he will be very sad if you don't come," Veata said.

"O.K., O.K.," I said, and then, "Thank you, thank you very much," to Veata's mother.

Veata's family's house was smaller than the one I was living in, but a pungent fishy coconut smell filled the place, and it seemed larger than it actually was. Angel ran around like a maniac as soon as I arrived, probably because his mother visibly stiffened at my presence. Veata's father greeted me with a slight bow and led me to a table to sit. He poured me a whiskey, and sat only after I did. We drank in silence, nodding and smiling every so often until Veata's cousin—Sopat, the whale-shark killer—showed up, eying me.

"Maybe I should go?" I whispered to Veata.

"Why you go?" Sopat asked politely.

"We eat now," Veata said.

Her mother came out with two large bowls of coconut milk with garlic, onion, potatoes, and chunks of white flesh floating in it. It smelled wonderful. She put some rice in front of me on a small table and motioned for me to start eating, but I didn't want to until everybody sat. Eventually, Sopat sat across from me, and after she put Angel to sleep on a mat on the floor Veata joined us, followed, finally, by her father. Her mother kept working by the stove.

"You like?" Sopat asked.

My cue to take a bite of rice drenched in the thick soup. The potatoes practically melted on my tongue, and the broth was spiced perfectly. But the fish was rubbery and oily when I got to chewing it. My gag reflex kicked in, and I looked for a napkin to spit. I could feel the sweat dripping under my arms. But soon the coconut milk counterbalanced the oil, and I swallowed. Veata's father smiled at me expectantly, and as the partially chewed mixture went down my throat I managed a version of the same smile we had been exchanging over liquor before.

Everybody started eating once I did, even Veata's mother, who sat on a stool behind her nephew and her husband. We ate in silence for the most part, with Veata and Sopat speaking intermittently, I couldn't catch what about, but it seemed to be small talk. Sopat stared at me unsmilingly between bites.

I looked at Veata's father there, rail-thin and stooped over his chipped bowl, chewing each bite for what seemed like ten minutes. He should've been Veata's grandfather, not her father. In his face there was something I'd never seen in my own father's—nor in my own, to be perfectly honest. He looked peaceful, happy even. Proud to be feeding a guest from whom he'd sought help just a week before.

I'd had the nerve to pity him. All the while he could've been pitying me. Or should've been. He chewed and smiled, chewed and smiled, and against all my own rules I found myself wondering about him, so I said as much to Veata after I'd managed to swallow another oily, briny mouthful.

She looked at me, stunned by the inquiry.

She began, "Father lost his first family to Khmer Rouge. They kill his two son in front of his eye because he try to hide them in the house. His wife, she die working in the camp, and—" Veata stopped, searching my eyes for a sign that she'd said too much.

Her father kept smiling between bites while Veata talked, telling me how he had found his way south to Kampot in 1980, during the famine. He had no idea what she was saying, but there he was, chewing his food full-cheeked as if he dined in this manner all the time. Dined like the King of Cambodia. Feasting upon the meat that kings eat. ♦

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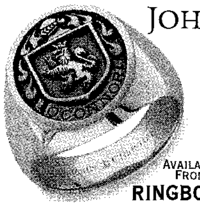

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# THE CRITICS

## THE CURRENT CINEMA

# TEEN DREAMS

*“Superbad” and “Delirious.”*

### BY DAVID DENBY

The twenty-three-year-old comic actor Jonah Hill has an aureole of electrified hair, a coarse whine, and plump hands, which he waves around like an unhinged conductor. Hill specializes in playing huffy near-hysterics. He was part of Seth Rogen’s crew in “Knocked Up”—the petulant boy who had a nervous breakdown in a hospital waiting room when he realized that disease might be lurking nearby. In “Superbad” he teams up with Michael Cera, a sweet-faced charmer who drains all tension out of his lines. If Hill is as frantic as the Three Stooges wrapped into one, Cera (from the TV series “Arrested Development”) is so circumspect—a young man hampered by ethics—that he never makes himself clear. The two actors play inseparable high-school pals, Seth (Hill) and Evan (Cera), who must soon part company and go off to college, and they are magically funny together. I recently wrote that I could happily do without any more movies devoted to the breaking of the male bond. Yet here’s an uproarious and touching picture on that theme, directed by Greg Mottola, who made the 1997 independent film “The Daytrippers,” and co-produced by Judd Apatow, who wrote and directed “Knocked Up.” Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, who were high-school buddies in Vancouver, began working on the script when they were thirteen. The movie still displays vestiges of infantile glee, but, after much revision and some obvious guidance, the structure and a lot of the dialogue have become ripely Apatovian. Like “The 40-Year-Old Virgin” and “Knocked Up,” the movie combines desperately filthy talk with the most tender, even delicate, emotion.

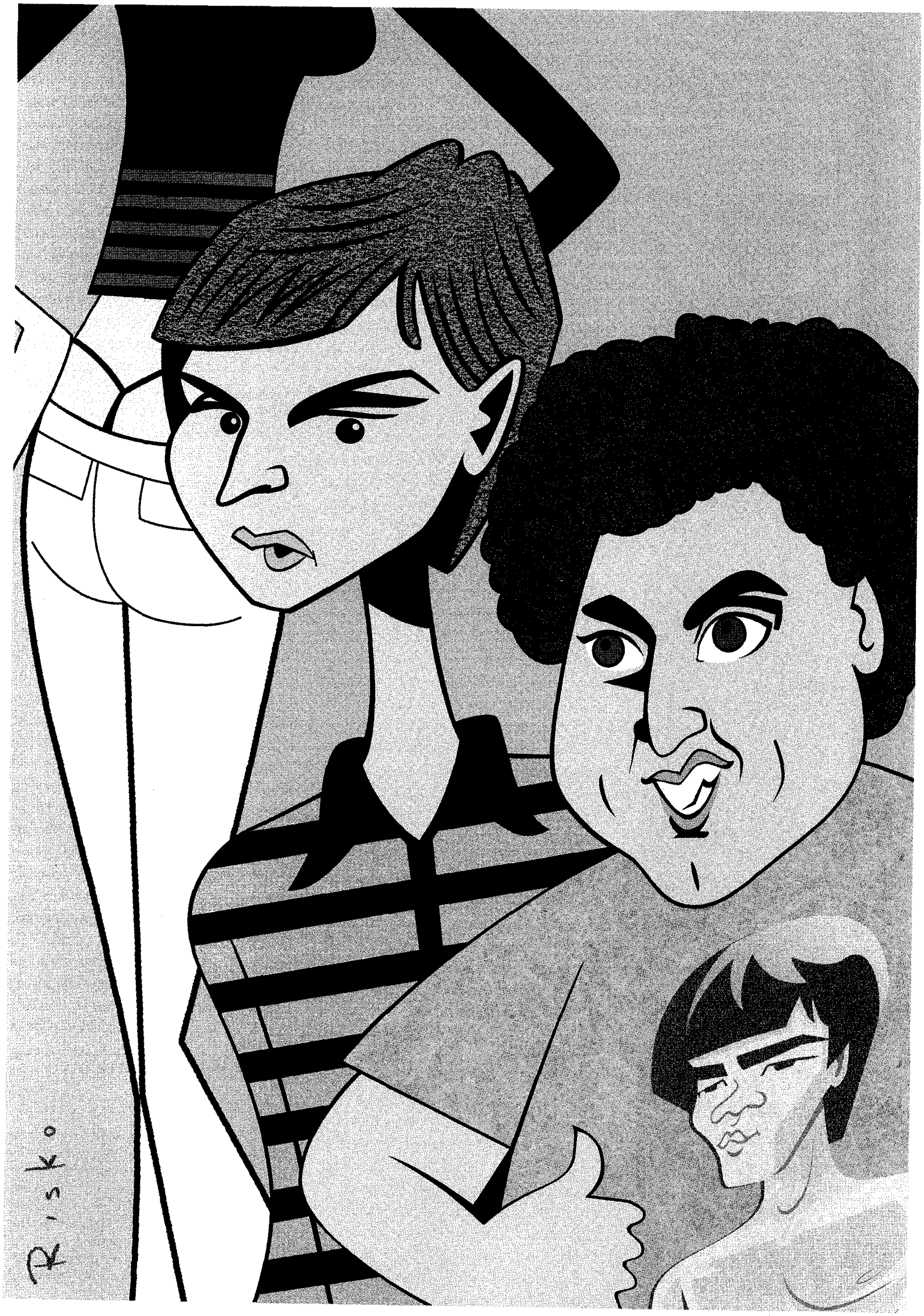
“Superbad” is a suburban mock-epic. Seth and Evan, with the help of their friend Fogell (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), agree to buy the booze for a party that the coolest girls in their class are throwing. The boys are convinced that if they deliver the goods the girls will get so drunk that they’ll make out with guys by mistake. “We could be that mistake!” Seth shouts, hopefully. Getting themselves to the party, however, turns out to be a journey somewhat more difficult than that endured by the Greeks coming home from Troy. Fogell, a primal nerd with a needle nose and a voice like a vibrating thistle, procures a fake I.D., which identifies him simply as McLovin, a Hawaiian organ donor. As McLovin, he gets clobbered by a thief as he’s buying the liquor; a couple of antic cops then decide that the bruised and shaken boy is really a macho hero, and drive him all over town, getting smashed and shooting off their guns. (They want to be teen-agers themselves.) Meanwhile, Evan and Seth fall in with some pugnacious lowlifes having their own party. The boys’ friendship almost falls apart under the strain of arriving at the proper gathering with an armful of booze.

In spirit, “Superbad” isn’t so different from “Fast Times at Ridgemont High” (1982) and other rude teen comedies made years ago. But the tone of “Superbad,” like that of other recent teen movies, is so profane and anatomical that it would shock Sean Penn’s loutish Spicoli. The boys in “Superbad” are all Internet-porn addicts. Their talk is not just dirty but bizarrely detailed—spangled with fantasy, odd practices, and curious devices. They know more about sex than boys did a couple of decades ago, but they’re frightened by what they know—the expectation of performance is so much more explicit. For them, the only mystery is flesh itself, and the presence of a willing girl sends them into anguished fits of dithering. The movie succeeds as a teen’s wild fantasy of a night in which everything goes wrong, revised by an adult’s melancholy sense that nothing was ever meant to go right.

At times, Mottola loses that kind of perception of character and destiny in mere slapstick: Jonah Hill gets knocked over by a car not once but twice, and is smacked with a baseball bat as well. The scenes of the two gleeful cops (Rogen and Bill Hader) horsing around with Fogell never rise above the level of goofy TV. Mottola is at his best when he sticks to the trials of the Seth-Evan friendship and pulls quirky rhythms out of his actors. He creates a couple of minor miracles. For example, there’s a scene in which Cera is stuck in a room with a group of meatballs who think he’s some hot young singer and won’t let him out. He begins to croon in a light, uncertain voice, and the guys are so stoned that they start singing backup, as if he were an MTV star leading them along. Mottola is also adept at the kids’ casual meetings and run-ins—the way, for instance, the boys want to look at the girls’ bodies in school but turn away embarrassed, even though the girls are eager to be looked at. And, working with Martha MacIsaac and Emma Stone, as Seth and Evan’s prize targets (both of them smarter than the boys), Mottola skillfully manages the missed connections and semi-incoherence of sozzled boy-girl chatter—the talk that hops around like a needle skipping from one groove to another and then back again.

The kids have their party, but the sex-

*Michael Cera and Jonah Hill in “Superbad,” a movie directed by Greg Mottola and co-produced by Judd Apatow.*



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ual encounters fall on the comic side of catastrophe. At the same time, there's a gentle and entirely intentional homoerotic strain—never acted upon—running through the Seth-Evan friendship. In a startling digression, Seth airs his memories (which we see in flashback) of a time when he was a little boy and couldn't stop drawing penises. A kind of exuberant art show follows, with page after page covering school desks—simple line drawings of magnificent organs and phallicized trees, artillery, and towers. The sequence is hilarious and charming—a child's garden of verses for our time. What the teen-age Seth really wants from his romantic life remains a mystery. When the boys, the morning after the party, run into the girls in a mall, and the couples pair off and go in opposite directions, Seth casts a sorrowful glance at the receding Evan. Heterosexuality, that infinitely dangerous terrain, will be a place he enters gingerly and with more than a little regret.

The media celebrity system is kept aloft not just by powerful handlers but by layers of semi-anonymous toilers—press agents and talent bookers, and, well below them, headwaiters, bouncers, and chauffeurs—all of whom help build and guard a mystique of which they, as much as anyone, are the victims, since most of them are disposable. But at least they work and are paid at the stars' behest, whereas paparazzi get paid only when they violate someone's privacy. This nearly criminal group of intruders are caught in a situation that almost guarantees self-loathing: much of the time, they pursue minor celebrities who they know are just the products of chance, luck, and the frantic labor of people like themselves. "Delirious," the new film by the writer-director Tom DiCillo—whose comedy "Living in Oblivion" (1995) is the best movie made about independent filmmaking—takes a clear-eyed but sympathetic look at a Manhattan paparazzo, one Les Galantine (Steve Buscemi), who lives on the edges of a system that abuses but also needs him. Les is a cynic, a moocher, and a loser, yet, in his unhappy way, he is also an ever hopeful novitiate in the Temple of Fame. He wants that scandalous tabloid cover shot that will earn him a week or two of esteem. In his world, that's as good as it gets.

Les picks up a pretty street kid—Toby (Michael Pitt), who wants to be an actor—makes him his assistant, and teaches him how to get into parties, cadge goody bags, and other necessary skills. They live in Les's grubby apartment, but, as outcasts from their families, they are both spiritually homeless—two lost men spinning around the city, trying to force their way past sullen gatekeepers. As DiCillo admits, the movie bears more than a casual resemblance to "Midnight Cowboy"—with Dustin Hoffman as the battle-scarred bum and Jon Voight as the beautiful outsider—but there's also an element of "A Star Is Born." Les and Toby have multiple encounters with a troubled young pop star (Alison Lohman), who sees something innocent in Toby that touches her. But his innocence is easily shed. Toby eventually hooks up with the singer, but first he lives with a talent booker (Gina Gershon), who gets him his own "reality" cable show and makes him a star. On his way up, Toby leaves Les behind.

"Delirious" was shot quickly, with a handheld camera, and some of it feels raw, both visually and emotionally. Buscemi is haggard and bilious, a bottom dog who will never give up, and Pitt's angel face seems to rot after a while. Some of the plot turns don't quite make sense, but this is still a strong, bitter movie about a milieu that the director intimately understands. DiCillo is terrific at mapping out what might be called the traffic aspects of fame: the rushing in and out of hotel rooms and clubs; the pecking order; the fluent sycophancy; the back-and-forth of favors and rebuffs. "Delirious" comes close to satire at times, but it doesn't exaggerate a brutal and unstable process. Les, despite all his sordid habits, is a baby compared with the genuine professionals working the scene. And Toby may be on top, but you'd have to be a fool to think he'll stay there long. The movie is exhilarating in a way that only hard-won knowledge of the world can be. ♦

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## DEPARTMENT OF OVERREACTION

*From the Washington Post.*

A man sawed off his hand at a Fairfax County butcher shop last night after a dispute over his order, county police said.

Police said the man was taken to a hospital in serious condition after the 7 p.m. incident in a market in the 7000 block of Spring Garden Drive in the Franconia area.

Police said that they understood that the man had wanted goat and was given chicken.

## BOOKS

# BLOWS AGAINST THE EMPIRE

*The return of Philip K. Dick.*

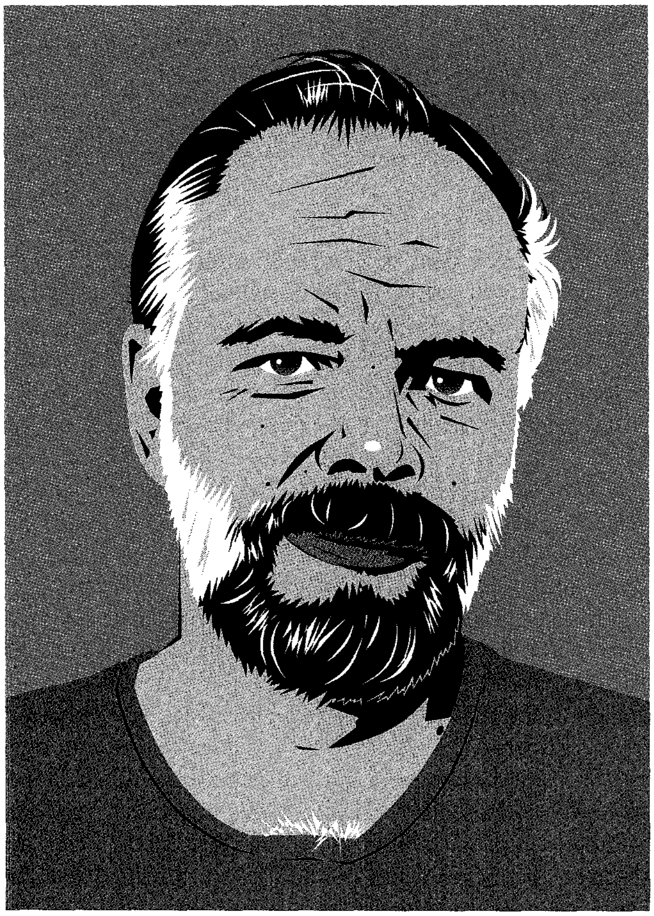
BY ADAM GOPNIK

There's nothing more exciting to an adolescent reader than an unknown genre writer who speaks to your condition and has something great about him. The Ace paperback cover promises mere thrills, and the writing provides real meaning. The combination of evident value and apparent secrecy makes Elmore Leonard fans feel more for their hero than Borges lovers are allowed to feel for theirs. When they *tell* you it's going to be good, what more can you hope for it to be?

Eventually, enough of these secret fans grow up and get together, and the writer is designated a Genius, acquiring all the encumbrances of genius: fans, notes, annotated editions, and gently disparaging comprehensive reviews. Since genre writing can support only one genius at a time—and no genre writer ever becomes just a good writer; it's all prophet or all hack—the guy is usually resented by his peers and their partisans even as the establishment hails him. No one hates the rise of Elmore Leonard so much as a lover of Ross Macdonald.

Of all American writers, none have got the genre-hack-to-hidden-genius treatment quite so fully as Philip K. Dick, the California-raised and based science-fiction writer who, beginning in the nineteen-fifties, wrote thirty-six speed-fuelled novels, went crazy in the early seventies, and died in 1982, only fifty-three. His reputation has risen through the two parallel operations that genre writers get when they get big. First, he has become a prime inspiration for the movies, becoming for contemporary science-fiction and fantasy movies what Raymond Chandler was for film noir: at least eight feature films, including "Total Recall," "Minority Report," "A Scanner Darkly," and, most memorably, Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner," have been adapted from Dick's books, and even more—from Terry Gilliam's "Brazil" to the "Matrix" series—owe a defining debt to his mixture of mordant comedy and wild metaphysics.

But Dick has also become for our time what Edgar Allan Poe was for Gilded Age America: the doomed genius who supplies a style of horrors and frissons. (In both cases, it took the French to see it; the first good critical writing on Dick, as on Poe, came from Europe, and particularly from Paris.) Like Poe's, Dick's last big book was a work of cosmic explanation in which lightning bolts of brilliance flash over salty oceans of insanity. Poe's explanation of everything was called "Eureka." Dick's was "VALIS." The second, literary Dick is now in the Library of America ($35), under the excellent editorial care of Jonathan Lethem, a passionate devotee, who also provides an abbreviated chronology of Dick's tormented life. Four of the sixties novels are neatly packed together in the handsome black covers: "The Man in the High Castle," "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch," "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" (the original of "Blade Runner"), and his masterpiece, "Ubik."



*Dick's mixture of satire and fantasy has inspired countless films.*

QUICKHONEY

Dick's fans are not modest in their claims. Nor are they especially precise: Borges, Calvino, Kafka, Robertson Davies are cited, in the blurbs and introductions, as his peers. A note of inconsistency inflects these claims—Calvino *and* Robertson Davies?—but they are sincerely made and, despite all those movies and all that praise, have a slight, useful tang of hyperbolic defensiveness. One of the first things that everyone is inclined to say about Dick is that his subject and his mostly straight-to-paperback publication kept him from literary respectability, leaving him a neglected cult writer who is only now beginning to get his due.

On the evidence of the biographers, though, this doesn't seem quite true. While he served a fairly long apprenticeship—a series of almost unreadable realist working-class novels that he wrote in the fifties are now back in print—and struggled to make money, from the time "The Man in the High Castle" won a Hugo Award, in 1963, he was famous, admired, and *read.* He wasn't reviewed on the front page of the *Times Book Review,* but so what? Reading his life—either in the reflective French version, by Emmanuel Carrère, or in the thorough and intelligent American one, by Lawrence Sutin—one has a sense not of a man of thwarted ambition but, rather, of a man burning up with ideas and observations who found in a pop form the perfect vehicle for expressing them.

Dick's allegiance was not to literature

"*Hey! Are you wearing a wedding ring?*"

• •

but to *writing* and to the possibilities of writing as a form of protest and instant social satire. Another twist of fate, or circumstance, and he could have ended up as Rod Serling; another and he could have ended up as Marty Balin, writing lyrics for Jefferson Airplane. But it's hard to imagine any circumstances in which he would have ended up as Doctorow, or wanted to. There were a million places to write sci-fi in those years, publishers eager to have it, and readers eager to argue about it. You can find unfairly neglected writers in America; Dick, with a steady and attentive transatlantic audience, was never one of them.

Dick's early history is at once tormented, hustling, and oddly lit by the bright California sunshine of the late fifties. Born in 1928, he had a twin, a sister named Jane, who died when she was only a month old; like Elvis Presley, who also had a twin sibling who died, Dick seems to have been haunted for the rest of his life by his missing Other. He seems to have blamed his mother, unfairly, for her death, poisoning their relations. He had one of those classic, bitter American childhoods, with warring parents, and was dragged back and forth across the country. He had loved science fiction since boyhood—he later told of how at twelve he had a dream of searching in *Astounding Stories* for a story called "The Empire Never Ended" that would reveal the mysteries of existence—and he began writing quickie sci-fi novels for Ace in the fifties and sixties. "I love SF," he said once. "I love to read it; I love to write it. The SF writer sees not just possibilities but wild possibilities. It's not just 'What if'—it's 'My God; what if'—in frenzy and hysteria. The Martians are always coming." The hysteria suited him. He seems to have been a man of intellectual passion and compulsive appetite (he was married five times), the kind of guy who can't drink one cup of coffee without drinking six, and then stays up all night to tell you what Schopenhauer really said and how it affects your understanding of Hitchcock and what that had to do with Christopher Marlowe.

"The Man in the High Castle" (1962), the book that made Dick famous, is in many ways the least typical, and least interesting, of his sixties novels. It tells what would have happened if the Germans had won the Second World War, and, though skillfully done, it leaves his imagination too tethered to reality and "research" to resonate; not enough Martians come. It's in "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch," two years later, that his style explodes.

Dick tends to get treated as a romantic: his books are supposed to be studies in the extremes of paranoia and technological nightmare, offering searing conundrums of reality and illusion. This comes partly from the habit, hard to break, of extolling the transgressive, the visionary, the startling undercurrent of dread. In fact, Dick in the sixties is a bone-dry intellectual humorist, a satirist—concerned with taking contemporary practices and beliefs to their reductio ad absurdum. If we oppress the Irish, why not eat them? Swift asked, in the model of all black satire—and if we can make quotidian and trivial the technology that has already arrived, Dick wonders, then why would we not do the same to the future yet to come, psychic communication and time travel and the colonization of Mars? Although "Blade Runner," with its rainy, ruined Los Angeles, got Dick's antic tone wrong, making it too noirish and romantic, it got the central idea right: the future will be like the past, in the sense that, no matter how amazing or technologically advanced a society becomes, the basic human rhythm of petty malevolence, sordid moneygrubbing, and official violence, illuminated by occasional bursts of loyalty or desire or tenderness, will go on. Dick's future worlds are rarely evil and oppressive, exactly; they are banal and a little sordid, run by a demoralized élite at the expense of a deluded population. No matter how mad life gets, it will first of all be life.

In "The Three Stigmata," for instance, immigrants have been forced off an overheated Earth for colonies on Mars and elsewhere, and live in cheap communal hovels. For recreation and escape, the Martian colonists build "Perky Pat" dioramas: little doll houses inhabited by the Barbie-like Perky Pat and her Ken-ish boyfriend, Walt. Fanatical about the details of the miniaturized worlds—a whole industry flourishes to supply Lilliputian furniture and appliances—the colonists take a powerful, illegal hallucinogen called Can-D, which lets them "translate" the bodies and lives of Pat and Walt: for a brief, intoxicated moment they *are* Pat, or Walt, living in sixties-style San Francisco, and happy.

At one level, the Perky Pat cult is obviously a satire of middle-class escapism, and, particularly, of American television—if we are prepared to stare stoned at that box for blank escape, why not at a more convincing one? But if it was Dick's gift to find, again and again, these extended hyperbolic parallels, it was his genius to take them to a level of earnest madness that makes satire touch the edge of the sublime. He saw that his Perky Pat devotees would begin to grant their sad entertainment the force of divine revelation. They argue violently about whether the Perky Pat visions are just "trips" or, as the Perky Pat fundamentalists insist, real experiences of supernatural incarnation. Industrialized entertainment becomes the entering wedge of religion.

Dick's admirers identify his subjects as (in the words of Ursula K. Le Guin) "reality and madness, time and death, sin and salvation." Later, as he became crazier, he did see questions in vast cosmological terms, but in these sharp, funny novels of the sixties he was taking on a more pointedly American question: Are there reliable boundaries between vicarious and real experience? Is there *anything* that can't be made into a form of show business, and any form of show business that can't be made into something more? Recreation and religion, and their intertwining, are the DNA of his worlds: the tedium of existence forces us toward "fun"; fun becomes the basis of our faith.

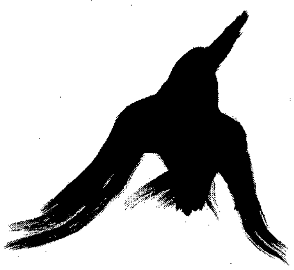
Yet Dick's societies of entertainment are, in turn, oblivious of their basis in organized violence. In "The Zap Gun," a Cold War satire from 1967, for instance, two monolithic competing political blocs, Wesbloc and Peep-East, have such an overabundance of weaponry that eventually they turn to "plowsharing" it, making weapons that are really toys and ashtrays. They depend on gifted psychic visionaries who see weapons as playthings—turning a military killer-automaton into a new kind of Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robot—and who are as rare, and as well paid, as movie directors here on the other side of the mirror.

The gift of Dick's craziness was to see how strong the forces of normalcy are in a society, even when what they are normalizing is objectively nuts. In "Clans of the Alphane Moon," from 1964, a mental hospital in a remote solar system has been abandoned by its keepers, and the lunatics have, over time, proliferated and organized themselves into a strange but functioning and interdependent country: a clan of paranoids supplies the statesmen, the Skitzes live in poverty but have wild poetic visions, the Deps provide a depressed realistic appraisal of the future, and the manics are the warriors. It's weird, but it's a *working* society, not a suicidal one. And a society that in some ways resembles Dick's own, that of the Johnson-Nixon years. Of the normalized madhouse on the Alphane moon, a psychiatrist says:

> Leadership in this society here would naturally fall to the paranoids. . . . But you see, with paranoids establishing the ideology, the dominant emotional theme would be hate. Actually hate going in two directions; the leadership would hate everyone outside its enclave, and also would take for granted that everyone hated it in return. Therefore their entire so-called foreign policy would be to establish mechanisms by which this supposed hatred directed at them could be fought. And this would involve the entire society in an illusory struggle, a battle against foes that didn't exist for a victory over nothing.

In "Ubik" (1969), in turn, the first premise is that the ancient human dream of communication with the dead has been achieved at last—but, when you go to speak with them, there is static and missed connections and interference, and then you argue over your bill. At the beginning of the novel, one of the heroes, Runciter, tries to connect with his "passed" wife, Ella:

> "Is something the matter, Mr. Runciter?" the von Vogelsang person said, observing him as he floundered about. "Can I assist you?"
>
> "I've got some *thing* coming in over the wire," Runciter panted, halting. "Instead of Ella. Damn you guys and your shoddy business practices; this shouldn't happen, and what does it mean?" . . .
>
> "Did the individual identify himself?"
>
> "Yeah, he called himself Jory."
>
> Frowning with obvious worry, von Vogelsang said, "That would be Jory Miller. I believe he's located next to your wife. In the bin."
>
> "But I can see it's Ella!"
>
> "After prolonged proximity," von Vogelsang explained, "there is occasionally a mutual osmosis, a suffusion between the mentalities of half-lifers. Jory Miller's cephalic activity is particularly good; your wife's is not. That makes for an unfortunately one-way passage of protophasons. . . . If this condition persists your money will be returned to you." . . .
>
> Facing the casket, von Vogelsang pressed the audio outlet into his ear and spoke briskly into the microphone. . . . "This is very unfair of you, Jory; Mr. Runciter has come a long way to talk to his wife. Don't dim her signal, Jory; that's not nice."



The typical Dick novel is at once fantastically original in its ideas and dutifully realistic in charting their consequences. No matter what things may come, they will be exploited, merchandised, and routinized by the force of human weakness. And the interesting corollary: it won't matter; the world of speaking ghosts will work about as well as this one. A society of paranoids can work as well as Nixon's America did and, perhaps, in similar ways.

The other crucial thing one notices rereading Dick today is how much he belongs to a particular time, and how keeningly the music of that time runs through his books—not the music of the spheres, or of the future, but the AM-FM radio soundtrack of the sixties and early seventies. On the one hand, the screeching, treble, machine-gun announcements of public disasters; on the other, the chesty, cooing accompaniment of hipster reverie and psychedelic jamming. (You had to be there.) These two worlds were separate then, or felt separated—people did turn to progressive-rock stations with the feeling that the mixture of the d.j.'s deep, stoned voice and "Layla" was a form of rebellion against the Empire. (You *really* had to be there.) Dick's world is always structured around that sort of division: the public news is of one kind, private understanding another. A small, futile, but perceptive band of stoners and hipsters is ranged against the Empire; they don't win, but they do see.

All this remains thrilling and funny; to detail Dick's conceits is to inventory a time. The trouble is that, much as one would like to place Dick above or alongside Pynchon and Vonnegut—or, for that matter, Chesterton or Tolkien—as a poet of the fantastic parable he was a pretty bad writer. Though his imagination is at least the equal of theirs, he had, as he ruefully knew, a hack's habits, too, and he never really got over them. He has three, at most four, characters, whom he shuffles from hand to hand and novel to novel like a magician with the same mangy rabbits. There is the sexy young stoned girl; the wise or shrewish wife; the ordinary schlub who is his Everyman; and the Mad Engineer who is usually the Designated Explainer. He flogs these types into semi-life by means of Ellery Queen devices, including the depressing one of funny names. Then, there is the narrative falsely propelled by the one-sentence paragraph, the internal monologue that really isn't, and sometimes both together:

> Sometime during the night, he reasoned, she had come into the room, and then some process had started in her or around her. She had sensed it and had crept off, hiding herself in the closet, so he wouldn't know; in her last few hours of life—or perhaps minutes; he hoped it was only minutes—this had overtaken her, but she had made no sound. She hadn't wakened him. Or, he thought, she tried and she couldn't do it, couldn't attract my attention. *Maybe it was after that, after trying* and failing to wake me, that she crawled into this closet.
>
> I pray to god, he thought, that it happened fast.

That's from the beautiful and hallucinatory "Ubik," in which Dick also develops the mysterious idea of a "fading" universe, where objects slowly mutate back to their earlier essential forms; hi-fis become Victrolas as they sit there. With the ideas removed, though, it could be in any standard police procedural of the period. The trouble isn't that Dick suffers by some school-marmish standard of fine writing. It's that the absence of any life within the writing on the page ends up robbing the books of the vital force that pushes you past pages. As an adult reader coming back to Dick, you start off in a state of renewed wonder and then find yourself thumbing ahead to see how much farther you are going to have to go. At the end of a Dick marathon, you end up admiring every one of his conceits and not a single one of his sentences. His facility is amazing. He once wrote eleven novels in a twenty-four-month stretch. But one thing you have to have done in order to write eleven novels in two years is not to have written any of them twice.

That's probably why Dick's reputation as a serious writer, like Poe's, has always been higher in France, where the sentences aren't read as they were written. And his paint-by-numbers prose is ideally suited for the movies. The last monologue in "Blade Runner" ("All those moments will be lost in time like tears in rain. Time to die"), improvised by Rutger Hauer on the set that day, has a pathos that the book achieves only in design, intellectually, because the movie speech is spoken by a recognizable person, dressed up as a robot, where Dick's characters tend to be robots dressed up as people.

In February, 1974, Dick, after having a tooth pulled by the dentist, and still high on the vestiges of sodium pentathol, opened the door of his house to get a prescription from a delivery girl—and had a vision that dominated and damned the last eight years of his life. The delivery girl visiting the already drug-addled Dick was wearing a fish medallion; Dick casually asked her about it, and she fingered it to show him that it was an ancient Christian symbol. Dick had an overwhelming, numinous experience of "unforgetting": he eventually saw (the vision came in bursts) that he and the girl were both early Christians in flight from Roman persecution and exchanging a coded language of gesture. He wasn't seeing, Shirley MacLaine style, that he had been a Christian in an earlier life; the point was that he was one now. The entire phenomenal world around him was an illusion created by a fallen female God, twin to a good immaterial God; he was experiencing not a flashback but a flash-in. Sometime in the first century—he later pinned it down to the year 70 C.E.—the passage of time had been deliberately stopped by the Empire, the Black Iron Prison. There was no 1974; there never had been. It was still the year 70. The Roman Empire had never ended.

Dick spent the rest of his life working out the complexities of this idiosyncratic Gnosticism, achieving, at last, a fantastically elaborate metaphysical cosmology—the central conception was of VALIS, for Vast Active Living Intelligence System—that he placed (under the signature of his alter ego Horselover Fat: the Greek meaning of "Philip" combined with the German meaning of "Dick") at the end of a visionary novel, also called "Valis" (1981). Dick's admirers can fight for days—and over hundreds of pages—about the meaning, the precise content, and the value of the "2-3-74" visions. As the people around him testified, hallucinations and fantasies, wild paranoid delusions, and plot-spotting filled his mind. He really did go crazy, and it wasn't the cute-crazy of the movies, with well-cast hallucinations and Jennifer Connelly to comfort you. It was true staring madness, hell on earth. But, as Lawrence Sutin insists, at another level Dick always had a saving, ironic awareness that his crazy visions might just be crazy visions, and this gave him, at times, a comic distance from them which deepened his writing.

"Valis," the novel, the first and best in a trilogy in which Dick struggled desperately to articulate what he had seen, is a hard book to read, and a harder one to forget. Without Dick's name, it almost certainly wouldn't have been published—it's just too static and strange. Yet, once you force yourself to read it, and read past the really nutty bits, it emerges as perhaps the most emotional and in an odd way the most artistically achieved of all his books. In a manner ironically reminiscent of mid-period Philip Roth—if you can imagine a mid-period Philip Roth in which three-eyed aliens living in a parallel dimension play a crucial part—Dick divides his persona into two voices. One belongs to Horselover Fat, who has had exactly the epiphany that Dick had in 1974, and is trying to cope simultaneously with the mental breakdown that the vision entails and with his sad personal circumstaces (one of his girlfriends is dying horribly of cancer, as was one of Dick's); the other belongs to "Philip Dick," who narrates the book, in an empathetic but disinterested tone, correcting Fat's (that is, his own) faults and speculating calmly on the real meaning of his epiphany.

There are many books with unreliable narrators under the control of sane authors; this is the only one I know where a sane, reliable narrator (on the book's own terms) is under the control of a clearly crazy author. What makes it heartbreaking is the author's consciousness, expressed sporadically through the fictional narrator Dick, that he (that is, the real Dick, embodied in the pathetic Fat) has undoubtedly gone nuts—but that, just as undoubtedly, he is in possession of the truth about the cosmos. His account of his vision is braided with the details of cancer treatments and the mordantly rendered specifics of time spent in a ward for the insane—a man who knows he's broken but believes that the breaking has poured forth a flowing truth.

"The core of my writing is not art but truth," Dick wrote a year before he died. "Thus what I tell is the truth, yet I can do nothing to alleviate it, either by deed or explanation." It doesn't dilute the force of his vision to see it as a metaphor, consistent with, but crazier than, the central metaphor of his earlier work: the social arrangement of power is always that of a brute oligarchic minority forcing its will on a numbed population, with amusements the daily meal and brutality the implicit threat; for all that has changed technologically, that fatal pattern has never really altered. The future will be like the present, he had once known, and now he saw that the past was like the future, too.

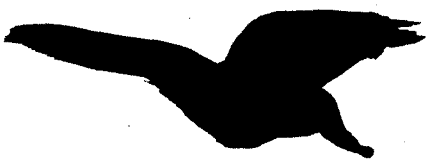
What is moving in Dick's madness is his insistence that the surest sign of the madness of the world outside him is the violence that we accept as normal. In "Clans of the Alphane Moon," he had already glimpsed the possibility that normal governing might be the work of paranoids. This Nixon-era vision becomes, in the VALIS books, a metaphysical truth. "The Empire is the institution, the codification, of derangement; it is insane and imposes its insanity on us by violence, since its nature is a violent one," Fat writes. That this is followed by an explanation of how those deaf-mute three-eyed invaders arrived in ancient Sudan from a planet in the star system Sirius does not diminish its force; if anything, it increases it, by reminding us of the price the visionary paid for it.

Until his death, of a stroke, in 1982, Dick never stopped crying out. He was buried at last beside his infant sister, Jane, the missing half he had longed for and eventually made into a part of his cosmic mythology, the much mourned female God. The vision of an unending struggle between a humanity longing for a fuller love it always senses but can't quite see, and a deranged cult of violence eternally presenting itself as necessary and real—this thought today does not seem exactly crazy. The empire never ends. ♦

# BRIEFLY NOTED

Be Near Me, *by Andrew O'Hagan (Harcourt; $24).* David Anderton, a fifty-six-year-old English priest in a gritty Scottish town, comes from a long line of Catholic martyrs, but he himself has settled for quieter satisfactions: good Alsatian wines, Chopin Nocturnes, banter with his housekeeper about the twelfth-century roses in the garden. Then, one Good Friday, he encounters Mark and Lisa, two charismatic juvenile delinquents at the local Catholic school, and he's drawn to them like a moth to fire. O'Hagan tackles a highly charged subject with exceptional intelligence and subtlety. Father Anderton's voice can be arresting even when he's describing heartburn ("I felt an empty, dyspeptic scorch as I drove to the school, like a rising argument at the centre of my chest"), and our growing intimacy with his inner voice describes its own arc of seduction and betrayal. No one gets off easily here, and yet the corruptions revealed are not necessarily the expected ones: as O'Hagan reminds us, the variety of deceptions we practice on ourselves and others is almost infinite.

The Assassin's Song, *by M. G. Vassanji (Knopf; $25).* This resplendent novel traces the path of Karsan Dargawalla, who is brought up, as generations of his forefathers have been, to be the "gaadivaras, the successor and avatar" of a seven-hundred-year-old Sufi shrine in Gujarat, a mausoleum of Muslim origin but for centuries open to all religions. Karsan, rebelling against "the iron bonds of history," leaves for Boston and Canada, though he ultimately returns to India to "research, recall, and write about" his abandoned heritage. Vassanji eloquently details the sufferings of Karsan's family as the price of his individual freedom, but suggests that this abandonment was necessary, and that tradition, in the face of India's "ancient animosities," must be engaged with critically and in the context of the wider world.



You Will Make Money in Your Sleep, *by Emily White (Scribner; $25).* Dana Giacchetto, a young rocker turned investment banker, became a quintessential figure of the late nineties, managing investments for Leonardo DiCaprio, Phish, and other glitterati and attracting a large show-business and fashion clientele. But when Giacchetto's high profile triggered an S.E.C. investigation, it emerged that the four hundred million he claimed to be managing was grossly exaggerated, and that much of his star clients' returns were really just deposits redistributed from other accounts. White and her husband knew Giacchetto from the beginning and considered him a friend, though they later discovered that they had lost a substantial sum. This personal connection is the book's strength and its weakness. White's memories of nineties excess and her close-up observation of Giacchetto are compelling, but her grasp of the New York-Hollywood nexus in which he operated lacks investigative rigor.

Shakespeare the Thinker, *by A. D. Nuttall (Yale; $30).* Nuttall, who died earlier this year, and who trained in both philosophy and literature, here traces ideas about motivation, identity, speech, and symbol in Shakespeare's plays. His study is rich in unexpected juxtapositions: Hippolyta, of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," finds herself in casual conversation with David Hume, and Titus Andronicus is seen in the context of "Goodfellas." The analysis never pulls too far away from the action onstage; indeed, Nuttall painstakingly shows Shakespeare's skill at negotiating abstract ideas through suspense, conflict, and character. For example, he observes, Shakespeare often uses minor characters who form "islands" in the drama to think through philosophical ideas. The Shakespeare who emerges here is a "systematically elusive" intelligence, whose brilliance lay in his ability to join "verisimilitude to wonder."

DANCING

# MOZART MOVES

*Mark Morris at Lincoln Center.*

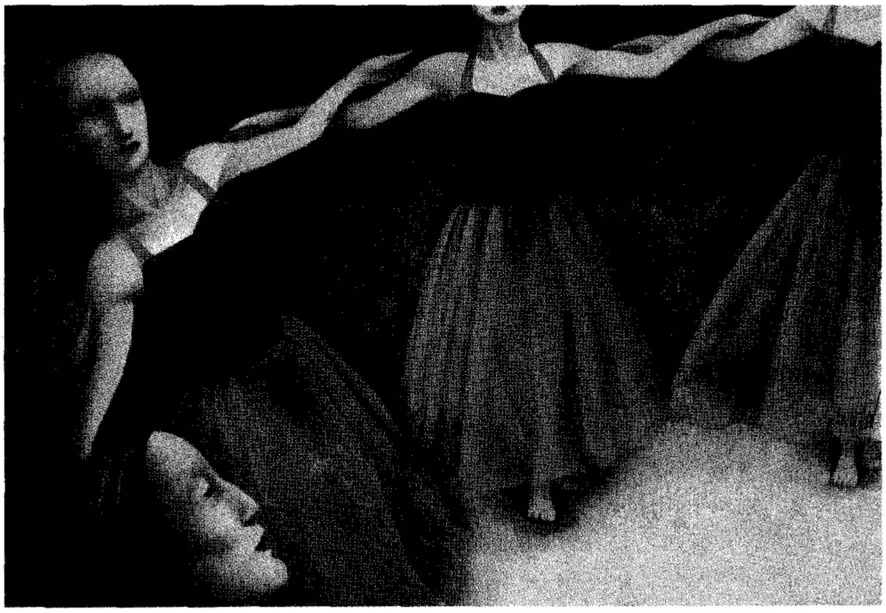
BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Mark Morris's "Mozart Dances" had its première at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival last August and, for three nights, played to sold-out houses at New York State Theatre, which seats almost three thousand people. This week, the show will be reprised for four nights, again at State Theatre, and tickets are going fast. Some ballets do that kind of box-office, but modern dance almost never does, not to speak of a show that, like "Mozart Dances," has no ostensible story but is just a choreographic setting of three Mozart piano pieces. Even with Emanuel Ax and Yoko Nozaki at the pianos, backed by the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra under Louis Langrée, you would have to be Mark Morris to sell out such a program.

Why is he so popular? One reason, I think, is that he gives people the modern pleasure of seeing abstract work without leaving them scratching their heads over what it was about. Though he may not have a story on the surface, he always has one underneath, in the form of movement motifs. For every dance, he devises a certain number of key gestures, which he then weaves through the choreography. Some of these gestures are naturalistic. In "Mozart Dances," for example, there is one that could be called the "danger" motif: the dancer suddenly turns and looks behind him, as if he had heard a strange sound, and then looks back at us as if to say, "Did you hear that?" But others of Morris's motifs have no obvious meaning when he first shows them to us. Only in the course of the dance do they come to tell a story.

As the lights go up on the opening section of "Mozart Dances"—"Eleven," set to Piano Concerto No. 11—what first strikes your eye is the backdrop, by the English abstractionist Howard Hodgkin. It is three enormous strokes of black paint on a white ground—very bold, with a hint of violence. That note is picked up by an ensemble of eight women, led by Lauren Grant, a tiny person who is a miracle of authority. The women in "Eleven" rarely touch each other, and that's wise, because they might get hurt. Almost all the movements are sharp-edged—they slice, they stab. Around the middle comes a truly frightening action: a woman lies on the floor, prone, and jabs her arms out sidewise, with her neck angled grotesquely. (The movement is more disturbing in that the woman has her feet pointed upstage. We can't see her face, find out how she feels.) This gesture returns again and again, and it's the last thing we see in "Eleven." Trouble is brewing.

It comes softly. The second dance, "Double," set to the Sonata in D Major for Two Pianos, belongs to the men. It opens with a soloist, Joe Bowie, in knee britches and a frock coat over a bare chest. (The costumes—most of them, like this one, high-low—are by Martin Pakledinaz.) As elegant as Bowie's outfit is the dance he performs, with flicked wrists and teacup fingers. Yet it is he who now introduces the "danger" motif. He does it as if it were merely a step, with no content, nothing to worry about. Wait.



*In "Double," the company's women enter in long gauze skirts, like ghosts.*

ANA JUAN

In the second movement of "Double," the rest of the men enter and go into a routine full of modern-dance good feeling. They hold hands in a circle (fellowship); they sweep around the stage (emotion). Soon some of them are falling to the floor. Should we worry about that? Not yet. They get up. But then a skinny young man, Noah Vinson, runs onstage, pierces their circle, and, in the middle of it, performs a solo that, finally, we recognize as tragic. He repeats the women's angled arms, but with his hands fisted and his face turned to Heaven. ("Why me, God?") He does the "danger" motif, and now we know what the danger was. He falls, as the men did before, but now it's for real. The men lift him, stiff as a corpse. Is he dead? Yes, or he's telling us about death, and, to underline his point, the company's women enter in long gauze skirts, like ghosts. This being a dance, Vinson is soon on his feet again, but then the story gets worse, for he reprises his solo, and this time it is even more wrenching—partly, I think, just because it is a reprise. In an interview last summer for Peter Sellars's New Crowned Hope Festival, in Vienna, to which the

Morris company was taking "Mozart Dances," Morris talked to me about this: "First we saw the circle, then we saw a filled circle—filled with Noah's solo—and then we see Noah's solo alone. We've learned how to see it." Here and in every dance, Morris has a kind of savings account, and keeps adding to it. Finally he spends it, on something big.

In "Twenty-seven," the last of the "Mozart Dances," the company, previously in black and gray, appears in white; the lighting (by James F. Ingalls) goes up; and a new Hodgkin backdrop adds some color, a stroke of red, to the black. As in most classical art—for example, Mozart's music—the final section of Morris's piece leads us out of darkness. The last movement of its score, Piano Concerto No. 27, has a frisky tune, like a children's song. In response, Morris calls in the thing that has always made him feel normal and happy, folk dance. The dancers slap their thighs and take off into the air. At the end, the women move to one side of the stage, the men to the other, and all of them hold out their arms to the others in loving friendship.

Or that's what I saw on opening night. When I described this to Morris, he said no, no, I was wrong—the ending was unsettling and ambiguous. Each of the pieces in "Mozart Dances," he told me, is like a Mozart opera, and "Twenty-seven" is like "Così Fan Tutte," with its famously disturbing ending. How could that be? I asked him. The dance is jolly, rousing. "You've seen it only once," he replied. "Look at it again. At the end, some of the dancers place their hands on their hearts, but the others put their arms out, as if they were asking a question. So it's like 'Huh?' Or 'Just a minute, I'm not finished with you.' Or, 'I love you.' Or, 'What's wrong?' That, to me, is 'Così.'... The opera ends in chaos. And the end of 'Mozart Dances,' I think, has the same irresolution."

After this conversation, I went back to "Mozart Dances," and I saw what Morris had described to me. In the final tableau, the dancers differ in what their arms say, and this lends a note of uncertainty. But I'm not sure I would have noticed this if he hadn't told me about it, because there seemed to be no preparation for it. Morris is occasionally weak in his endings. Sometimes, I believe, he just gets through his story before the composer does, and so he sort of marks time until the music is over. Even apart from the question of its conclusion, "Twenty-seven" does not have the same force as the rest of "Mozart Dances." I'm not complaining. A lot of great art is stronger in the middle than at the end. "Mozart Dances" is the most grave and lovely piece Morris has made in years, and in performance it is an utter thrill.

In the Morris company's early period, the nineteen-eighties, critics went on and on about the dancers. At that time, a number of Morris's women were big, sturdy girls, and several of his men were slight. The women could pick them up, and they did. This being the eighties, there was a great deal of political satisfaction over that. Also, Morris's dancers—whom, at the beginning, he often chose from among his friends—sometimes had difficulty with the hard steps he made for them, and this, too, in the wake of the mid-century avant-garde's disdain for virtuosity, led critics to congratulate the company on being "real," human. None of this was wrong; those politics were Morris's, too. In time, however, he changed his practice, if not his politics. As his first-generation dancers retired, he replaced them with people who were much more competent technically. At the same time, the bodies became more "ideal." The company still has a wider range of physical types than most dance troupes—Lauren Grant, at four feet eleven, would have trouble being hired by another company, whereas she is a star in this group—but there are now some standard-definition beauties here, people who could get modelling jobs: Julie Worden, Amber Darragh, Bradon McDonald.

Consequently, we find, today, fewer critical effusions about Morris's dancers. But the current company should be *more* celebrated, in that Morris has found dancers who, while they can actually do the steps he devises, are still as "real" as the democratic gang he had before. Grant, Craig Biesecker, David Leventhal: these people are accomplishing wonders, and they don't seem to know it. They have no "stage manner," no narcissism. Neither are they closed. They are simply frank and regular: people doing a dance. The same is true of the company's newcomers—a remarkable fact, because the newcomers are often the most opaque members of a dance troupe. (They don't feel secure yet, so they hide themselves.) Morris's most recent recruits, particularly the men—Dallas McMurray, Samuel Black, Noah Vinson—stand before us as if they were naked. Vinson, who is twenty-eight, seems much younger. He looks as though he hadn't finished growing yet, and that tenderness was an important part of his solo in "Double."

How does Morris get his dancers to perform so unaffectedly? I don't know the answer, and I almost don't want to know—I want to believe they're just that way—but here's something that Morris told me when we talked last summer: that, in making the women's dance in "Eleven" so severe, he was trying to extend them. When women put on pretty dresses and dance to Mozart, he said, they tend to go into "a group hug." He didn't want that; he forced them to be sharp and hard. With the men, it was the opposite. They're used to being hard, so he made them "dance in circles, nourishing, nesting." Both sexes resisted. "I had to push them," he said. "But that's how dancers become great, by doing what's difficult for them, by dancing against their grain." They did become great. You walked out of the theatre feeling that it was good to be alive, and in New York. But you don't have to be in New York to see "Mozart Dances." After its engagement at the Mostly Mozart Festival, it will go to Chicago later this month, Berkeley in September, Los Angeles in October. And this week, on August 16th, it will be shown on PBS's "Live from Lincoln Center." ♦

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### NEATEST TRICK OF THE WEEK

*From the Denver Post.*

A chief lieutenant in a violent drug and prostitution ring run out of an Adams County motel was handed a stiff sentence Monday.

Alvin Hutchinson received three life sentences and five 30-year sentences, followed by six years of supervised release, all to run concurrently.

### MUSICAL EVENTS

# ESCAPE TO NEW YORK

*Summer festivals in the city.*

BY ALEX ROSS

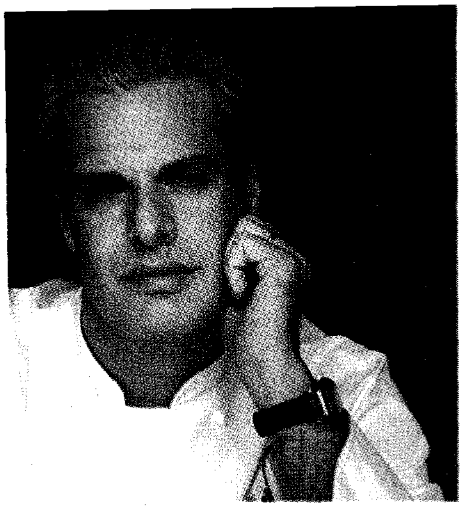
*Paul Lewis plays Beethoven at Mostly Mozart. Photograph by Jesse Frohman.*

My first summer in New York was the legendarily wretched one of 1993, when the temperature reached at least ninety degrees thirty-nine times and the Dinkins administration kept a light grip on civic order. For a freelance classical-music critic, the pickings were slim. After a tenuous month that included a recital at an Upper East Side hotel, various sweaty performances in parks, and a night or two of jazz, I calculated that I had been earning more in my previous job, as a video-store clerk in Washington, D.C.

The problem was that at that time classical music in New York all but shut down for the summer. Local musicians found work at festivals upstate; celebrity soloists made the rounds of the European watering holes. The major exception was the Mostly Mozart series, which shuffled drowsily through the Köchel catalogue for the benefit of listeners who seemed to enjoy the air-conditioning as much as the music. Every so often, someone would ask why the city offered so little in comparison to, say, London, where crowds have long packed the summertime Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. In 1996, the critic turned impresario John Rockwell took matters into his own hands and put together the first Lincoln Center Festival. Suddenly, there were experimental evenings of John Cage and Merce Cunningham, stagings of Virgil Thomson's surreal "Four Saints in Three Acts" and Hans Pfitzner's solemn "Palestrina," a Morton Feldman weekend. New Yorkers didn't always seize the opportunity—the empty seats at "Palestrina" could have accommodated all of Pfitzner's personal and political resentments—but the spell had been broken. More recently, Jane Moss, the vice-president of programming at Lincoln Center, has taken control of Mostly Mozart and transformed it into a coolly sophisticated affair in which Viennese classics brush against contemporary works, modern dance, and world music.

This year, July and early August have been nearly as frantic as the busiest periods of the regular season. The Lincoln Center Festival led off with two complete performances of Wagner's "Ring," with the orchestra, chorus, and house singers of the Mariinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg. The festival also presented George Benjamin's short opera "Into the Little Hill," an imaginative evening of theatricalized Monteverdi madrigals with the British group I Fagiolini, and a new Philip Glass song cycle, "Book of Longing," on texts by Leonard Cohen. Mostly Mozart, in its first week, issued a blast of Beethoven: three symphonies, three concertos, two sonatas, and all the late string quartets. In addition, there were offbeat musical events at the River to River Festival, a parade of significant pianists at the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at Mannes College (Alessio Bax contributed to the Beethoven boomlet with a formidable and sensitive rendition of the "Hammerklavier" Sonata), and Joel Sachs's Summergarden contemporary series at MOMA. For the first time in recent memory, New York is a year-round music city.

Lest anyone conclude that Bayreuth and Salzburg have been rendered obsolete, it should be admitted that there are certain discrepancies of atmosphere. Walking up the Green Hill on a Bayreuth afternoon or crossing the River Salzach at twilight is somehow more conducive



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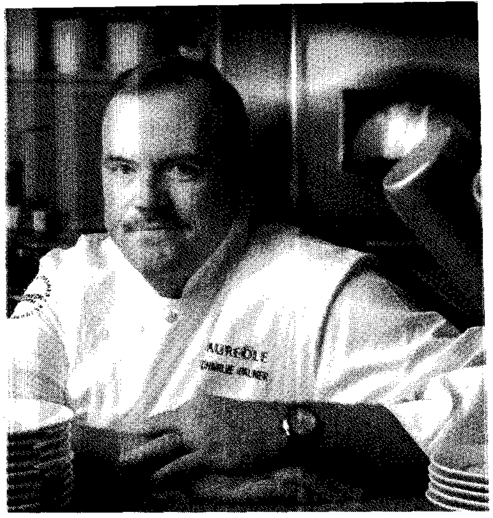

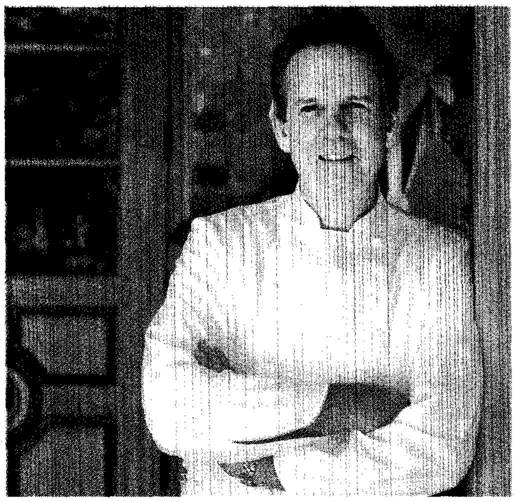

PHOTO OF RUTH REICHL: BRIGITTE LACOMBE

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to the contemplation of sublimity than riding the No. 1 train at rush hour while two squabbling strangers call each other "fatso" and "bitch," as happened to me on the way to "Götterdämmerung." Then again, once you are safely in the hall the journey to higher spheres becomes more awesomely abrupt.

The revivification of Mostly Mozart is no longer news, but it's worth noting a few factors that have contributed to its success. For one, Lincoln Center has supplied a generous budget, allowing a formerly modest-scaled festival to bring in first-rate soloists and ensembles. In the first week alone, it hosted the English pianist Paul Lewis, the vital young American cellist Alisa Weilerstein, the veteran California-based virtuoso Jeffrey Kahane, the Swedish Radio Choir, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the composer Osvaldo Golijov (the festival's first composer-in-residence), and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen. The resident ensemble, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, improves each year; the keen-eared French conductor Louis Langrée obtains a consistently bright, buoyant sound. At the same time, ticket prices have stayed low, generally running from thirty-five to fifty-five dollars. As a result, most concerts sell out, and the audience is healthily diverse in age and background. Events take place variously in Avery Fisher Hall (acoustically and aesthetically improved for the duration); in the cool confines of the Rose Theatre, in the Jazz at Lincoln Center complex (a vibrant space for orchestral music, as the Bremen concert proved); and in the Kaplan Penthouse, in the Lincoln Center tower (where candles are lit, complimentary glasses of wine are served, and listeners sit within ten or twenty feet of the performers).

As in past summers, the Kaplan concerts, which take place at the fashionably late hour of ten-thirty, produced several of the most memorable moments. Lewis, a pianist of inward, intellectual bent, sounded slightly out of place when he played Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto in Avery Fisher on Mostly Mozart's opening night. It was fascinating to hear this prototypical Romantic concerto done with such thoughtfulness and grace. Yet it all happened at a distance; you sometimes strained to hear. What a change an hour later, when Lewis arrived at the Kaplan to perform Beethoven's august final sonata, Opus 111. The intimacy of the setting meant that even the subtlest nuances of dynamics registered across the room. The music was sensitively phrased, lucidly detailed, naturally flowing in tempo, and, at the same time, intense, immediate, and expressively free. The first movement was fiercely argued without being forced. The second movement had the inexplicable clarity of a dream; the thirty-second notes in the fourth variation were spun out with breathtaking serenity. This deeply gifted musician is emerging as one of the master pianists of our time, as an ongoing cycle of Beethoven sonatas on the Harmonia Mundi label shows.

The next night, the St. Lawrence Quartet began a three-night survey of late Beethoven with the Opus 130 Quartet, in its original version, with the "Grosse Fuge" as finale. The St. Lawrence, which made a sensational New York début back in 1992, has lost none of its trademark exuberance after several changes of personnel. Geoff Nuttall, the St. Lawrence's free-spirited lead violinist, pointed out beforehand that the greatness of this quartet resides in its extreme swings of mood, and the most extreme is the transition from the heavenly Cavatina to the sublimely hellish fugue. The insight was fully realized in the performance that followed. Scott St. John, the new violinist, led the Cavatina with playing of Old World elegance, then abandoned purity of intonation when the savage fugue subject kicked in.

One night later, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, under Paavo Järvi, its artistic director, presented an all-Beethoven program at the Rose. Ingrid Fliter was the soloist in the First Piano Concerto, and she paled somewhat in comparison to Lewis; although her playing was secure and brilliant, it was too often clipped in articulation, excessively driven. Then again, driving ahead was the spirit of the night; from the first slashing chords of the "Creatures of Prometheus" Overture, Järvi let it be known that no patrons would slumber in their seats. This was big-band Beethoven, full of biting attacks, punchy accents, and stamping rhythms. The Bremen musicians responded electrically to Järvi's beat. The Seventh Symphony, which ended the program, took the form

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of a non-stop escalation of physical intensity. Suitably raucous applause followed. Populist but uncompromising, Mostly Mozart is beginning to give the Proms a run for its money.

The Lincoln Center Festival got off to a shaky start with the Russian "Ring," at the Metropolitan Opera House. The production suffered, first of all, from imponderably silly and grotesque stage pictures. George Tsypin, the designer, aimed for a neo-primitivist atmosphere, and a quartet of gigantic totemic figures set an appealingly spooky, Easter Island mood. Less effective were masses of hooded figurines, which resembled, in dim light, the kids from "South Park." The gods, men, and dwarves populating this landscape appeared to be refugees from a diseased wax museum. We saw spiky Las Vegas headdresses on the Valkyries, a Forest Bird dolled up vaguely like Mary Poppins, and Hagen in a dress. Closing your eyes didn't always help. Valery Gergiev continues to work his great Mariinsky orchestra too hard: at Lincoln Center the musicians had to play the four "Ring" operas twice in nine days, with predictably ragged results. The strings sounded weak, routinely overrun by the brass and percussion; from the right-hand aisle the performance sometimes sounded like an arrangement of the "Ring" for Volga boatmen and symphonic band. A smattering of strong vocal efforts almost saved the day: notably, Vasily Gorshkov's vividly sketched Loge, Olga Savova's darkly domineering Brünnhilde, Mlada Khudoley's lustrous Sieglinde. Over all, though, this was the clunkiest "Ring" I've ever seen.

At the opposite extreme was the presentation of Benjamin's "Into the Little Hill"—a political updating of the Pied Piper story, with a libretto by the playwright Martin Crimp, in which a minister tries to reassure a restless voting public by commissioning an extermination of rats. The production, by Daniel Jeanneteau, was controlled in every detail, with nothing wasted and every gesture made to count. The approach matched the exceptional concentration and concision of Benjamin's music. The English composer, now forty-seven, has developed a late-modernist language that is scrupulous and sensuous in equal measure. The novel beauties of the instrumental writing, such as an admixture of cymbals to an eerie duet of basset horns, or enigmatic conversations between a bass flute and a cimbalom, cast a spell, yet the net effect was of loveliness coiled into dread. The Ensemble Modern played with needlepoint precision; Anu Komsi and Hilary Summers, who sang various roles in the piece, mastered Benjamin's sinuous vocal lines. All worked to fulfill Crimp's evocation of the Pied Piper's song: "The deeper we burrow, the brighter his music burns." ♦

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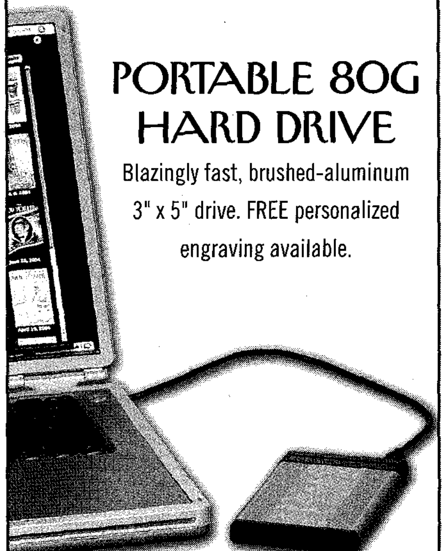

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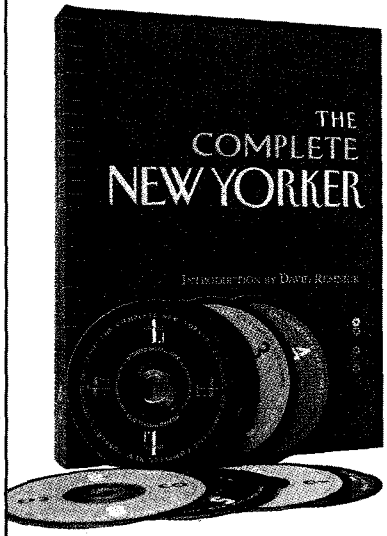

Both are updated through April, 2006. Update disk also available separately. For Mac and PC.

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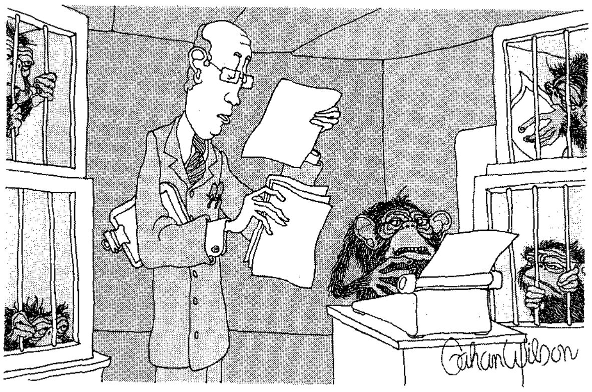
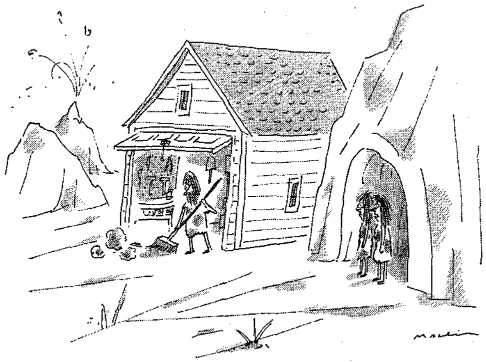
## CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

*Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Lee Lorenz, must be received by Sunday, August 19th. Finalists in the August 6th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the September 3rd & 10th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.*

### THE WINNING CAPTION



*"Have you considered writing this story in the third monkey rather than the first monkey?"*
Robert Gray, Manchester Center, Vt.



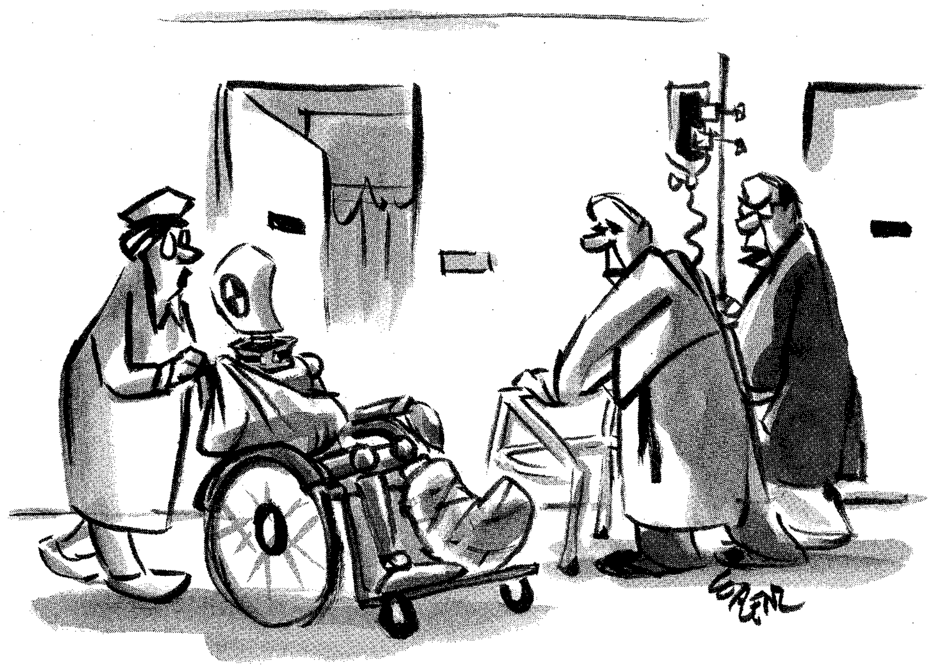
### THE FINALISTS

*"He needed a place to park his wheel."*
Ruthie Hayden, Owensboro, Ky.

*"Yeah, but the weirdest thing was, once he built it I suddenly felt compelled to give him a list of things to do around it."*
Stephen Fielder, Arlington, Texas

*"He's always thinking outside the rock."*
Jonathan Williams, Owings Mills, Md.

### THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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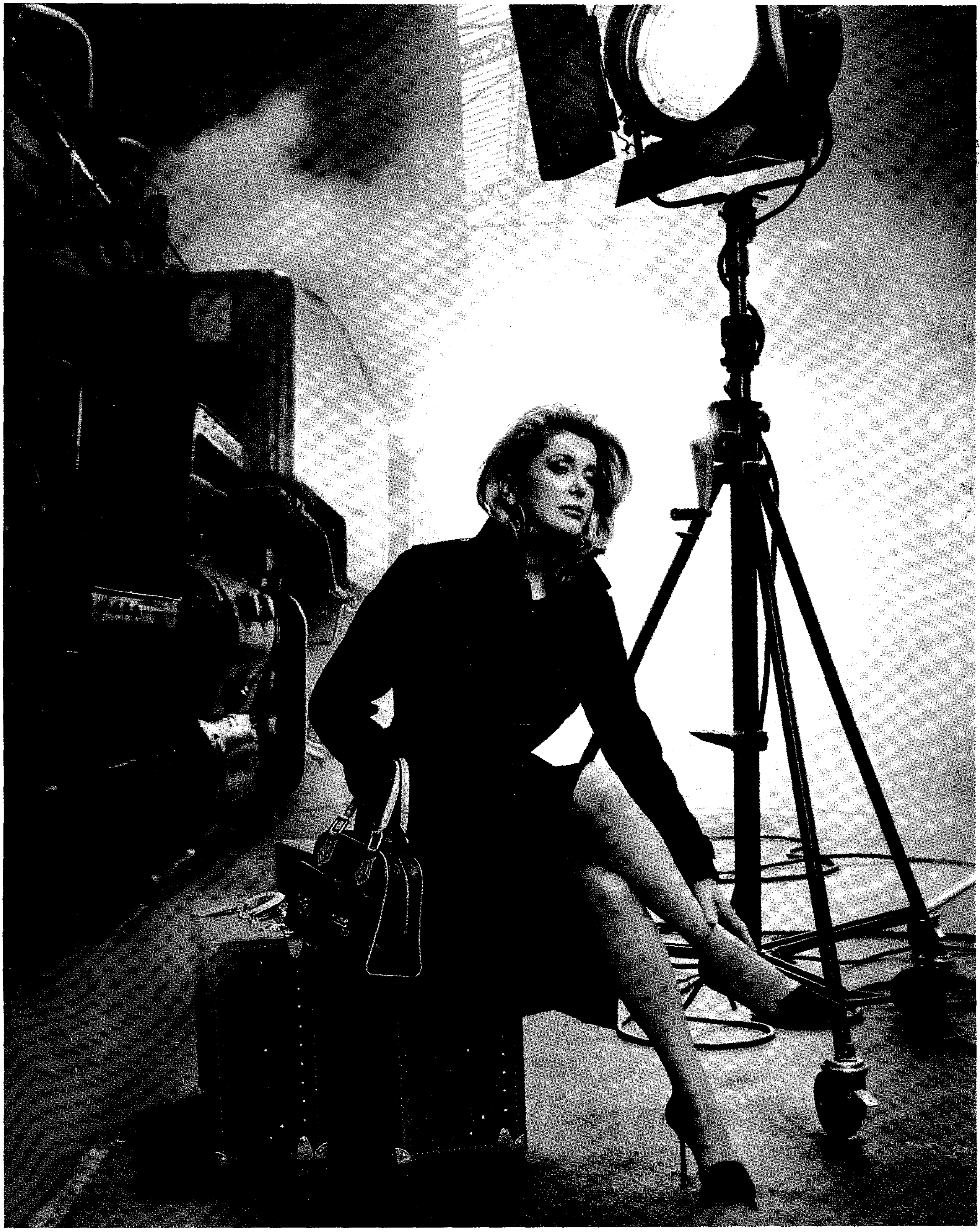

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